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'Kellogg peanut butter products not part of recall' PAGE 2

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, rate your level of confidence in President-elect Barack Obama's ability to revive the flagging U.S. economy.

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

113 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Historic Day

Barack Obama stood at the threshold of the White House on Monday, summoning fellow Americans to join him in service.

NATION...Page 15

Firsts

Before Barack Obama, there were Howard N. Lee, Blenda Wilson and Maurice Ashley.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

AS PRESIDENT OBAMA IS INAUGURATED

Renewed hope resonates in CNMI

By KRISTI EATON, NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com, n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTERS

Newly sworn in President Barrack Obama rose to the presidency on a platform that trumpeted the "audacity of hope" and that hope is resonating all over the CNMI, not only among elected leaders but within the community itself.

RELATED NEWS
Two NMI scholars take front seat in Obama inauguration. PAGE 2

Local biz sector upbeat on Obama presidency

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The local business community is hoping that the Barrack Obama presidency will usher in a new era in CNMI-U.S. relations that will eventually lead to the return of prosperity

See LOCAL BIZ on Page 4

Obama's presidency "has renewed the faith of America in our leaders—and in ourselves as the people who elected him," said Jane Mack.

Mack said Obama has many difficult tasks ahead of him and "if I could give him a message personally, I'd ask him to keep politics out of science; make decisions on the facts as they are, not as he'd like them to be or as others wish they were,"

For NMC instructor Sam McPhetres, the coming of a

See RENEWED on Page 4

Local group to join suit vs federalization

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A group that includes former House Speaker Oscar Rasa is joining the CNMI government's lawsuit against federalization, with the help of a local law firm that has agreed to provide its legal services for free.

The O'Connor law firm had approached the CNMI Descents For Self Government and In-

See GROUP on Page 4

Senate OKs revised $156.76M budget

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Senate unanimously passed a revised fiscal year 2009 budget of $156.76 million yesterday during a regular session.

Several senators said they had reservations in passing the budget bill but felt it was imperative to have controls in place.

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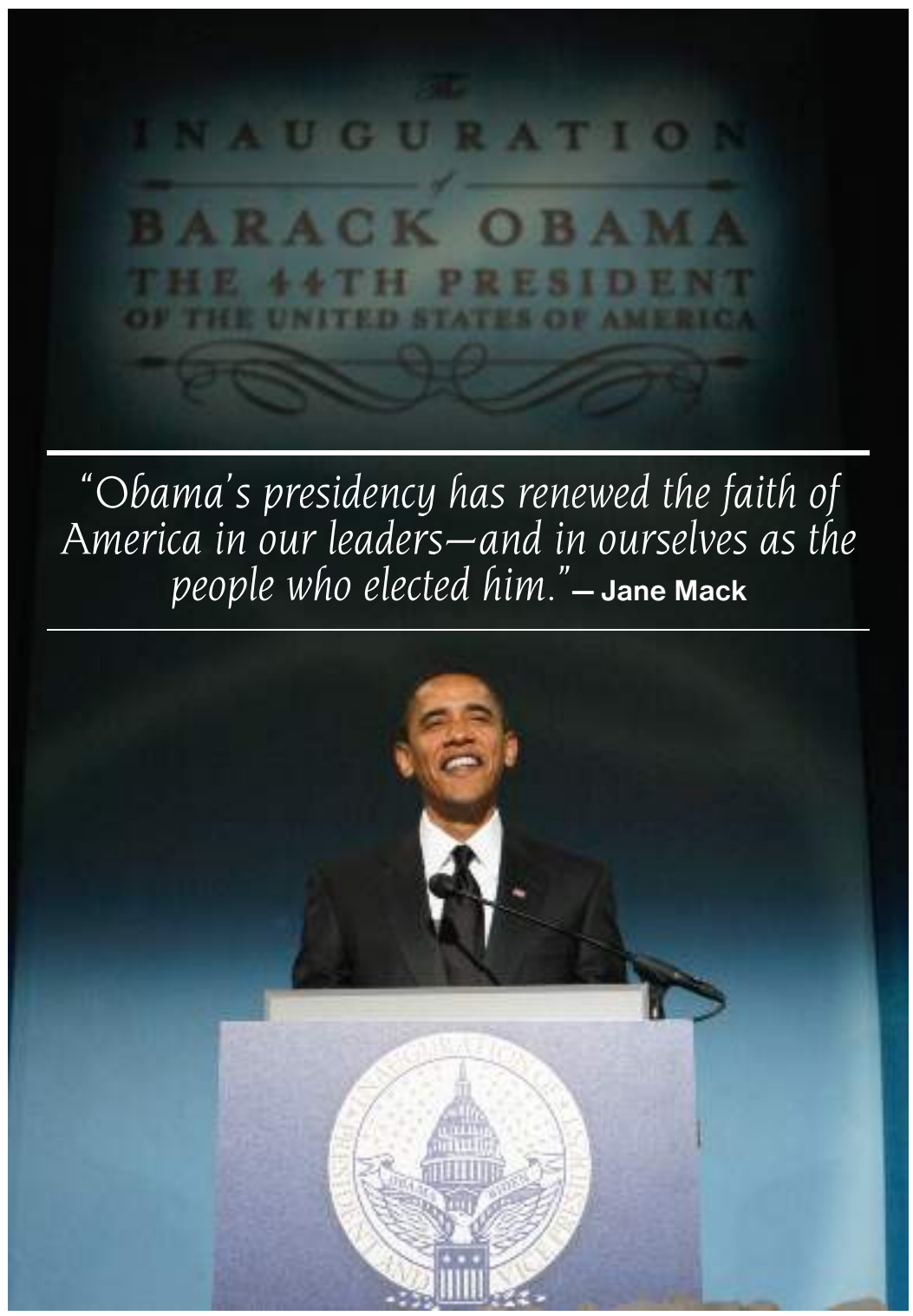

"Obama's presidency has renewed the faith of America in our leaders—and in ourselves as the people who elected him." — Jane Mack

AP

President elect Barack Obama takes the stage before introducing Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., at a dinner in Washington, Monday, Jan. 19, 2009.

Local

THANK YOU!

"I wish to thank all of my friends and relatives that voted for me for the Little King & Queen of Hearts. If it were not for your constant texting, I would not have won as the "Little Queen of Hearts". Thank you so very, very much!" From Taliyah Victorina Sablan Bocago.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

D&Q: Kellogg peanut butter products not part of recall

The local wholesaler of Austin Quality Foods Toasty Crackers with Peanut Butter said yesterday that their product is not part of the nationwide U.S. Food and Drug Administration recall.

Kellogg Co. said Monday that federal authorities have confirmed that salmonella was found in a single package of its peanut butter crackers,

"They [Bureau of Environmental Health] contact us very frequently about different recalls. There's nothing of any concern about our products," said D&Q manager Max Kretzers.

"Kellogg is actually not the peanut butter company. They may have some products that use peanut butter and they haven't advised us of any concern. We do sell peanut butter from another supplier but then again they're not involved," he added.

A staff from BEH, meanwhile, said the agency is aware of the U.S. recall and that they are doing their due diligence in inspecting wholesale and retail companies that may be selling the contaminated products.

According to the Associated Press, Kellogg had recalled 16 products last week because of the possibility of salmonella contamination.

On Monday, the Battle Creek-based company said that contamination was confirmed by the Food and Drug Administration in a single package of Austin Quality Foods Toasty Crackers with Peanut Butter.

Food companies and retailers have been recalling products with peanut butter in them because of suspicion of contamination amid a salmonella outbreak that has killed at least six people and sickened more than 470 others in 43 states. At least 90 people have been hospitalized.

Also Monday, Midwestern grocer and retailer Meijer Inc. said it was recalling two types of crackers and two varieties of ice cream because of the possibility of salmonella contamination: Meijer brand Cheese and Peanut Butter and Toasty Peanut Butter sandwich crackers, and Peanut Butter and Jelly and Peanut Butter Cup ice cream. ***(Mark Rabago)***

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Two NMI scholars take front seat in Obama inauguration

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This photo was sent yesterday by Christina Ta, left. At right is Marie Camacho, the other selected student from the CNMI for the University Presidential Inaugural Conference.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Christina Ta, who is currently in Washington, D.C., has been exchanging messages with her mother on Saipan on an almost per hour basis to update her about what's going on at the inaugural ceremonies of President Barrack Obama.

The 20-year-old Ta is one of two CNMI scholars of the University Presidential Inaugural Conference who have been given the once-in-a-lifetime chance to attend the inauguration. The other is Marie Camacho.

During a visit to Annette Ta's office yesterday, both mother and daughter were chatting over the Internet about the excitement building up in the nation's capital.

The elder Ta said her five other children are very supportive of Christina. All the other siblings are in the U.S. for studies.

"We are proud of her. It is a once-in-a-lifetime chance," said her father, Ta Bun Kuy, who owns Dollar Days Wholesale.

Ta and Camacho will be honored for five days in Washington, D.C. and attend a black-tie Inaugural Ball and other activities surrounding the historic event.

Ta and Camacho are joined by other students from across America who have the opportunity to interact with the presidential candidates, White House officials, congressional staff members, political experts, and other VIPs.

Ta and Camacho were selected last year based on their leadership skills, which they demonstrated during the National Youth Leadership Forum at the University of California-Berkeley.

The UPIC provided scholars with a deeper understanding of the history behind the electoral process and the rich traditions surrounding the presidential inauguration.

Ta and Camacho were roommates during the conference.

Ta is now in her second year at the University of California-Los Angeles taking up Medicine.

Fund's accrued liability goes down to $879M

The Retirement Fund's accrued actuarial liability decreased from $1 billion in October 2005 to $879 million in October 2007, and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial credits this to the reforms the administration implemented to shore up the Fund's finances.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, in a statement issued yesterday after reviewing a PowerPoint report from the Fund, expressed satisfaction with the economic relief.

"The reforms we implemented have made a positive impact in saving the CNMI government's defined benefit plan," said Fitial, who reviewed the report while in Washington, D.C. for President Barack Obama's inauguration.

The governor noted that in the year 2000, the accrued actuarial liability was $809 million and it grew to $1 billion by 2005, growing at a rate of some $40 million per year before the reforms were implemented in 2006 and 2007.

"Essentially, our hard work in 2006 and 2007 reduced the financial bleeding and curtailed the growth of the accrued actuarial liability," said Fitial.

He credited Public Law 15-70 and the conversion from the defined benefit plan to the defined contribution plan, which was supported by both the administration and the Legislature.

"Clearly, P.L. 15-70, the Defined Benefit Plan Reform Act of 2007, and the new defined contribution plan went a long way to reduce fund liabilities," Fitial said in the statement.

Fitial was also pleased contributions required by the government were reduced from $61 million in 2005 to $35 million. Three reasons were cited for the reduction: Benefit reductions due to P.L. 15-70, strong investment return in FY 07, and members transferring to the DC plan.

Although the Fund suffered severe losses in 2008, Fitial noted a few mitigating factors: A $128 million reduction in accrued actuarial liability since 2005; a 45-percent funding of unfunded liabilities; and a closed DB plan that prevents ever increasing pension liabilities.

Tony Muna, Fitial's former Special Assistant for Management and Budget, said, "it would be advisable for the Fund to revisit investment policy given the negative growth trend or flat-lining for DB plan liabilities."

"At some point, this will be about liquidating DB plan assets versus growing assets," he added.

The government's failure to remit all required contributions might have been a plus considering the severe market downturn in 2008, according to Muna.

"Considering that the Fund is claiming $165 million in government contribution receivables and had those contributions been made, Fund losses could have been 28 percent of $700 million, or some $210 million, instead of $114 million," said Muna, now CUC's executive director.

Meanwhile, the Fund's actuary has proposed a series of specific legislative reforms to further protect the pension program.

"The Fitial administration understands that the Retirement Fund board and staff are considering some and have endorsed others. The administration is ready to work with the Fund and Legislature in enacting additional reforms," the statement said.

The governor, who has endorsed some reforms on the Fund's or actuary's wish list, plans to meet with the Fund and the Legislature after he returns from Washington, D.C. later this month. Fitial said he would be interested in seeing the proposed reform legislation and the Fund's analysis of each reform's financial impact.

Among the reforms endorsed by the NMIRF chairman, Fitial supports an initiative to issue a pension obligation bond to help stabilize the Fund's financial health. In October 2008, Sen. Maria T. Pangelinan introduced such an initiative in SLI 16-10.

"I am willing to support more legislative recommendations to protect the solvency of the Fund," Fitial said. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

Man gets 5-day prison term for stealing check

The Superior Court has imposed a five-day prison term on a man who stole a $213.50 check that belonged to the Tinian Delegation Office.

Associate Judge David Wiseman sentenced Donavan SN Borja to one year in prison, all suspended, except for five days, for theft.

Following a plea agreement, Wiseman gave Borja credit for the five days he has already served in jail.

Wiseman ordered Borja to perform 100 hours of community service and write a letter of apology to the owner of the poker arcade where he cashed the forged check.

The judge required the defendant to pay a $213.50 restitution to the victim and $25 in court assessment fee plus a probation fee.

The Attorney General's Office charged Borja with theft, forgery, and obstruction of justice. He signed a plea agreement and pleaded guilty to theft. The remaining charges were dismissed.

Borja stole the check, written to Three Way International, on Feb. 26, 2008, on Tinian.

The Tinian police started investigating the case on July 25 after a caller sought police's assistance over at Tinian Municipal Treasury's Office.

A Tinian detective said their investigation led to the identification of Borja as the person who stole the Tinian Municipal Treasurer's check in July.

Borja allegedly stole the check from the car of an employee of Tinian's Department of Commerce. The defendant then forged the check and handed it to his common-law wife, Lesly Ann Macaranas. Macaranas went to Kim's Market and brought a variety of foods worth $100 using the forged check.

Later that day, Kim's Market called Macaranas and informed her that the bank would not accept the check. Macaranas informed Borja about this, prompting him to go to Kim's Market and pay for the food.

According to Tinian police, Borja admitted to another person that he stole another check in the amount of $213 from the Tinian Delegation Office last Feb. 26. Borja apparently admitted he forged the check and cashed it at Cha Cha Poker.

The Attorney General's Office also filed charges against Macaranas and Marla Cruz Sablan in connection with the case. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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NEW

RENEWED

From Page 1

black United States President is "long overdue."

He said it has restored the reputation of America and "I am confident he's going to work hard."

The new administration, McPhetres believes, will benefit the territories because Obama himself was raised on an island.

This is a common refrain among government officials, who are hoping that Obama's roots will give the United States' highest official insight into issues facing the Commonwealth. Obama was born in Hawaii and spent time growing up there as well as in Indonesia.

"We're hopeful because as islanders we feel that we relate more to Obama, having him originally coming from Hawaii, that he would be more sensitive to the island way of living," said Senate President Pete Reyes. "Because of the fact he grew up on an island, he will see a lot of changes others failed to see because they don't relate. So we're hopeful."

But besides his island background, Obama is uniting the country, Reyes said.

"He's a symbol of a new hope, not just in the area of reviving the economy, but also bringing us all together as people. I'm very hopeful we're looking at a better future."

The new President understands the unique issues islands face, House Speaker Arnold Palacios said.

"I certainly believe it's a positive because he can relate to island life and knows the issues we face, the understanding of the plights and issues and decision making process," he said.

Rep. Joseph Camacho echoed Reyes and Palacios.

"There are many times we are forgotten or neglected because we 're so far off in another part of the world," Camacho said. "The fact that President Obama grew up part of his life in Hawaii, at least he will remember this part of the world."

Although Obama will be very busy, Camacho said he hopes he will remember the CNMI.

"I hope he hasn't forgotten the CNMI is part of the United States, and we're hoping for assistance from the federal government," he said.

Palacios said the CNMI must be proactive in making contacts and building a dialogue with the president's appointees. Palacios said he trusts new delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan will do a good job on the CNMI's behalf, but that should not stop local officials from building relationships.

With every new administration the CNMI is affected, said Charles Reyes, the governor's press secretary.

The Department of the Interior, which oversees the insular areas, will dramatically change, he noted, adding that there will be different policies and new relationships will need to be built.

"We don't know how it will change," he said. "But we'll have to establish good relationships with new leaders of the Interior Department, communicating our priorities and concerns, particularly with CUC and grants."

Last week, Ken Salazar, Interior secretary-designate, said he would work to reform the department that has been plagued by scandals in the past.

McPhetres also believes that Obama's tremendous support around the world, which few presidents have, will be an advantage and will serve him well.

McPhetres believes Obama can weather the economic storm and overcome the crisis. "He faces a broad range of issues. It would be very difficult for him to overcome the present challenges but we have to support him," he said.

Even those who didn't support him during the campaign are being buoyed up by the groundswell of support that the new administration is engendering across the nation.

"First of all I must tell you that I am a life-long Republican and did not support Obama. That being said, he was elected by the majority and I do believe in democracy so he is now my president," said Wolf Mojica of DFS Galleria Saipan.

Mojica hopes that Obama's promise of change is realized and that he will change the U.S. government's stance on the immigration. He said this is more favorable under the new head of the Department of Homeland Security.

Roslyn Leon Guerrero, coordinator for the Youth Congress, said the U.S. will once again make history.

"Many changes in our world is inevitable and much need to stay afloat and President Obama is willing to bring as much changes as he can," she said.

She said many have been waiting for this and the people who voted for him strongly believe that Obama is the man who can forge the way to bring about changes.

"Such as finding a way to aid the ailing economy worldwide, to build a better future for our children, to bring peace to our country and the world, and bring home our men and women in uniform, and to secure jobs for those who have lost their jobs as well as finding jobs for those in need."

Guerrero said Obama's term in office will be like a roller coaster ride, and his goals and ambitions may not be accomplished immediately "but I am sure he is more than able to meet those goals."

"With the faith we have in him, working cooperatively and contributing what we can when needed together, much can be accomplished," she said.

If given the opportunity to meet Obama, Taotao Tano's Gregorio Cruz Jr. said he would discuss the predicament the CNMI faces today and how the CNMI could get help.

He said he also wants to establish better communications, meetings, and discussions with the entire people of the Commonwealth and not just the elected leaders "about laws that would affect our people and our homeland as whole."

Other than that, Cruz said, he leaves all matters in the hands of Washington Delegate Gregorio Sablan to pursue and obtain what is in the best interest of the people of the CNMI.

LOCAL BIZ

From Page 1

in the islands.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president James T. Arenovski for one believes that the 44th U.S. President's call for the enactment of a new round of stimulus package will be to the benefit of the Commonwealth.

"It is hard to tell how this administration will affect us. But it seems that in the short-term a stimulus package is on its way and this will certainly help. In the long-term, Obama has spoken about reforms in immigration and these are sure to directly affect us…on whether it be positive or negative we will have to wait," he said.

Arenovski also added that the CNMI should be more proactive in communicating its needs to the new administration.

"We should be looking at making sure we do what is right for the future of the CNMI and, while doing that, we will find allies to champion our causes. With Greg Sablan in Washington, we now have a better chance at communicating that to those who can help our situation. Although we will not know soon how the Obama administration operates, it seems that he is concerned about a number of issues that directly affect us, plus the fact that he has some sensitivities to the territories."

Former Chamber president and 2009 gubernatorial candidate Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero, meanwhile, said the jury is still out whether an Obama administration will be sympathetic to the plight of the CNMI.

"Only time will tell whether the Obama administration will look favorably on the desperate needs of our small island community and economy, which of course also requires a local willingness to work toward a better relationship with the federal government."

Guerrero also hopes the CNMI can have a productive relationship with both mainland political parties.

"There is no good reason why we shouldn't. I think that a lot of historical antagonism between the CNMI and Democrats in Washington had to do with unfortunate policy choices made locally about how we should interact with the federal government. Our local leaders and congressional delegate should be working together and with, not against, the federal government to achieve our goals."

Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands chair Lynn Knight said she would like to see the CNMI benefit with the policies of the incoming administration, "but we don't really know at this time. A lot will depend on the Cabinet secretary appointments and their policies, which will unfold over time."

She also echoed Arenovski and Guerrero's call for Commonwealth leaders to work with the Obama administration and make the CNMI's voice be heard.

"The CNMI needs to have more—and frequent—communication with the U.S. government in order to create a better understanding of our unique economic circumstances and needs. We need to develop more relationships and fast. We have not been showing up on the 'radar screen' because of our small size and remote location, not to mention the fact that we haven't had a delegate in U.S. Congress. Now that we have our own delegate, I have high hopes that we can weigh in more successfully on issues affecting the CNMI. Thus said, I also think the federalization issue requires more attention because it will have such a serious impact on our economy."

Former Chamber president Anthony Pellegrino, on the other hand, said the Obama presidency is a "God-given gift to America and to the CNMI."

"Whether his polices prove right or wrong will depend on how we work together. We must stop forming ourselves into groups seeking our own little worlds. We have to become united as the United States did centuries ago. In unity lies strength. But this does not mean diversity is wrong. But once a course of action is decided we must work together. President Obama is a scintillating breath of fresh air and a renewed examination of who we are and where we wish to go."

As far as the Democrats having a traditional adversarial relationship with the CNMI, Pellegrino said that should be relegated to the bowels of history.

"Anyone who wants to continue that attitude should move to the farthest island away from the CNMI and contemplate his navel button alone. Obama's rise to the presidency has renewed faith in the American people. God bless America," he said.

GROUP

From Page 1

digenous Rights, offering its services to the group in filing a motion to support the lawsuit filed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial against the federal government.

Former House Speaker Oscar Rasa, the official spokesman and adviser of the group, said that he met with the O'Connor lawyers yesterday where they agreed to participate in the lawsuit.

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, lawyer Robert O'Connor said that they are going to file a brief of amicus curiae in the next 10 days supporting the CNMI lawsuit.

"We want to be involved because we think that the federalization law violates the Covenant and takes away our rights to self-government," O'Connor said.

Amicus curiae (friends of the court) refers to someone not a party to a case who offers information on a point of law or some other aspect of a case to assist the court in deciding an issue or issues. It is, however, the court's discretion whether to accept the volunteered information.

Rasa said the filing intends to amplify more arguments and issues than had previously been presented. He said it would help the court in assessing fundamental issues and present it with more angles to look at when deciding the case.

"The administration's arguments rely heavily on the potential economic harm that the federalization law will bring about, and this is why the U.S. said that the argument is hypothetical. However, we feel that there is a more fundamental issue here—the right to self-government as embodied in the Covenant," said Rasa.

"The issue of self-government is more fundamental than the economic issues," he added.

O'Connor echoed this, saying the right to self-government given to all the people of the CNMI by the U.S. government is the most valuable right the people have.

O'Connor said the federalization law passed in Washington, D.C.—"without any input from any elected congressman or senator"—is disastrous for the CNMI's economy and takes away the Commonwealth's right to self-government.

"The decision on that law was made by senators from Delaware [and] by congressmen from Idaho, none of whom we elect, none of whom give a damn about what any people here think," the lawyer said.

He said CNMI didn't have any congressman or senator who could debate the bill, offer amendments, or horse trade something that Idaho or Delaware wanted in return for something the Northern Marianas wanted.

"So we're pretty much in the situation that the colonists were back in 1770s when England was passing laws that drastically affected the economy of the colonies," O'Connor said.

"If you can't control your economy, you have no self-government," he added.

SENATE

From Page 1

"Despite some of the minor issues, I will forgo that because there is a need for accountability," said Sen. Joseph Mendiola.

The House of Representatives passed the budget bill last week. It now heads to the governor, where he will have 20 days to sign the bill, line item veto it, or veto it altogether.

The spending plan includes $148.1 million of projected government revenue, augmented with $5.17 million in Compact Impact funds, and $3.5 million of "unencumbered" money taken from numerous accounts outside the general fund, for a total of $156.76 million.

A separate $3.1 million is proposed for the Department of Public Lands, whose revenue is constitutionally reserved for the agency's administrative costs and for investment by the Marianas Public Land Trust, and cannot be used for central government operations.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial vetoed the last Legislature-approved budget of $165.4 million, citing an $8 million drop in projected local revenue. He then slashed government budgets across the board by 5.5 percent for the rest of the fiscal year.

Sen. Paul Manglona asked if the House would be prepared to override if the governor vetoes the revised budget. The House failed at their attempt to override the governor's veto of the original budget.

Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office, said the administration still has the same concerns they had after the House passed the budget. Critical cost-cutting measures must be imposed, he said, including austerity holidays and reprogramming authority.

"Mainly, we believe these critical cost-cutting components need to be incorporated in any major budget bill," he said. The measures could possibly be added to another bill, he said.

"They are politically unpopular," he added. "We know there is a lot of resistance in the Legislature. But given the financial situation, I think the governor's main concern is to get those incorporated."

The Legislature reduced the Retirement Fund contribution from 18 to 11 percent, which the administration appreciates, Reyes said.

The press secretary said the budget process is a political game.

"It's unfortunate," he said. "The budget process is inherently contentious. But we want to cooperate with them but I think there is just this lack of trust. We're going to try to work it as best we can."

Fitial worked very closely with the presiding officers on the monument proposal, Reyes noted.

"The budget is a little more difficult," he added, "but we're going to try to work it out by communicating our concerns, most prominent of which are austerity measures."

But House Speaker Arnold Palacios said the Legislature has reduced spending levels under the revised budget levels and each government branch should decide how to go about working with those numbers, whether it is austerity holidays or renegotiating contracts.

"There are so many ways to do it," Palacios said. "Every branch should do what it needs to do to reduce costs."

Every department head should not be limited to what the Legislature says, he added.

800 enroll for 2009 NMC spring semester

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College reported about 800 students who have enrolled in various degrees and certificate programs for the 2009 Spring Semester, including late registrants.

Regular classes began yesterday.

The Office of the College President said this semester's enrollment number is close to the previous semester's.

NMC stressed this initial estimate does not include enrollment for other nontraditional classes and programs that begin later in the Spring 2009 semester. Also not included in the count are new students who are registering this week during the late registration, which is up to next Friday, Jan. 23.

"The figure represents the approximate number of students who were enrolled in the college's fall 2008 semester," NMC said.

It also stressed that the spring enrollment is anticipated to increase with the launching of other classes, including ones that are part of the college's Community Development Institute.

NMC said it acknowledges several challenges to its recruitment efforts such as the relocation of families away from the CNMI due to economic hardships and its show-cause accreditation status.

"Economic hardships are compelling some students to enter the job force immediately after high school," it said.

Another challenge is the aggressive recruitment efforts by the military, which offers immediate financial bonuses for enlistment.

Despite this, NMC president Carmen Fernandez said she is pleased with the enrollment figures despite the current economic crisis.

Fernandez said they will continue to promote NMC programs to ensure that prospective students are aware of the benefits of attending the college.

These benefits, she said, include the transferability of credits to other accredited institutions, the relatively low cost of tuition in comparison to other colleges, and as well as the savings realized from not having to move off-island.

A staff at the NMC Admission office attends to one of the students who lined up for the last-minute requirements during yesterday's opening day of regular classes.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Two rescue boy, 3, from drowning

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Two men saved the life of a 3-year-old boy who nearly drowned at Pau Pau Beach in San Roque Sunday afternoon.

The Department of Public Safety recognized yesterday Darrel B. Concepcion and Ashley A. Castro "for their exceptional bravery" in rescuing the boy.

DPS spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said the boy had fluid in his lungs, but is currently in stable condition at the Commonwealth Health Center's Intensive Care Unit.

Ogumoro quoted a police report as saying that a teenager was supervising the victim and other children while they were swimming.

The incident happened when the teenager left for a couple of minutes. The boy was found floating.

Concepcion was at a nearby pavilion when he saw a crowd near the shoreline. He checked and saw an unresponsive boy lying on the sand.

Concepcion immediately administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the boy.

Castro was with family members at one of the pavilions when they heard several people screaming near the shoreline.

When Castro ran toward the shoreline, he saw Concepcion already applying CPR on the boy. Castro joined Concepcion in administering CPR on the victim until the medics arrived.

Medics transported the victim to CHC for further treatment and observation.

Ogumoro advised the community that it is extremely important that adults supervise children at all times, especially when children are swimming.

Aetna members welcome in the Philippines

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund is reminding people that the group's health insurance provider, Aetna Global Benefits, is accepted at three hospitals in the Philippines.

The hospitals include: Asian Hospital & Medical Center, Makati Medical Center, and Cebu Doctors' University Hospital

St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City is not officially contracted with Aetna, but they have allowed for one-time direct settlements, according to the Retirement Fund.

Mark Aguon, administrator of the Retirement Fund, said Aetna has always been accepted at the hospitals, but is reminding people because the agency often gets asked about it.

Many people go to the Philippines because it is cheaper than flying to Hawaii or the mainland, Aguon said.

Government employees and retirees receiving a pension from the Fund are recommended to make arrangements prior to traveling, the Fund said.

"The Retirement Fund's board of trustees and Fund management continue to work closely with Aetna in order to identify ways to provide the best quality health care to Fund members available in the Pacific region," a Fund statement said.

For more information, contact Aetna at 1-800-231-7729.

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Youths urged to take a stand on land ownership issue

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The issue of land ownership in the CNMI came before members of the Youth Congress during their second regular session on Saturday, with an ad-hoc committee urging young leaders to take a stand on the issue as it will affect the future of the islands' youths in the years to come.

The ad-hoc committee—composed of Efren Camacho (chairman), Sen. Maria Pangelinan, (vice chair), Edward Pangelinan, and David Sablan—spent time explaining to the Youth Congress about Article 12 and how it will affect their future.

"Article 12 has actually stifled the development and growth of our economy," the committee members stressed.

The committee explained that since 1978 the CNMI has experienced the Article 12 restriction, describing it as a government restriction that tells a private property owner what to do with his property.

"We are educated and mature enough to decide on our own without government interference. The CNMI government has no valid reason for interfering in the private affairs of individuals including privately owned land matters," the committee stated.

The Covenant and the Commonwealth Constitution provides that 25 years after the people become U.S. citizens, Article 12 will be submitted to a referendum or initiative for the modification of the land alienation provision.

The referendum will be in 2011.

"We believe that the Youth Congress has the responsibility to begin the education process that would help our people make an informed decision," the committee members said.

Edward Pangelinan, a former Resident Representative to Washington who was chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission, urged youth leaders to take a stand on the issue and vowed that the ad hoc committee will guide them and will be willing to provide information about this critical issue.

Article 12 states that the acquisition of permanent and long-term interests in real property within the Commonwealth should be restricted to persons of Northern Marianas descent, NMD.

Acquisition includes by sale, lease, gift, inheritance, or other means.

It also explains that a transfer to a spouse by inheritance is not an acquisition if the owner dies without issue or with issue not eligible to own land in the NMI.

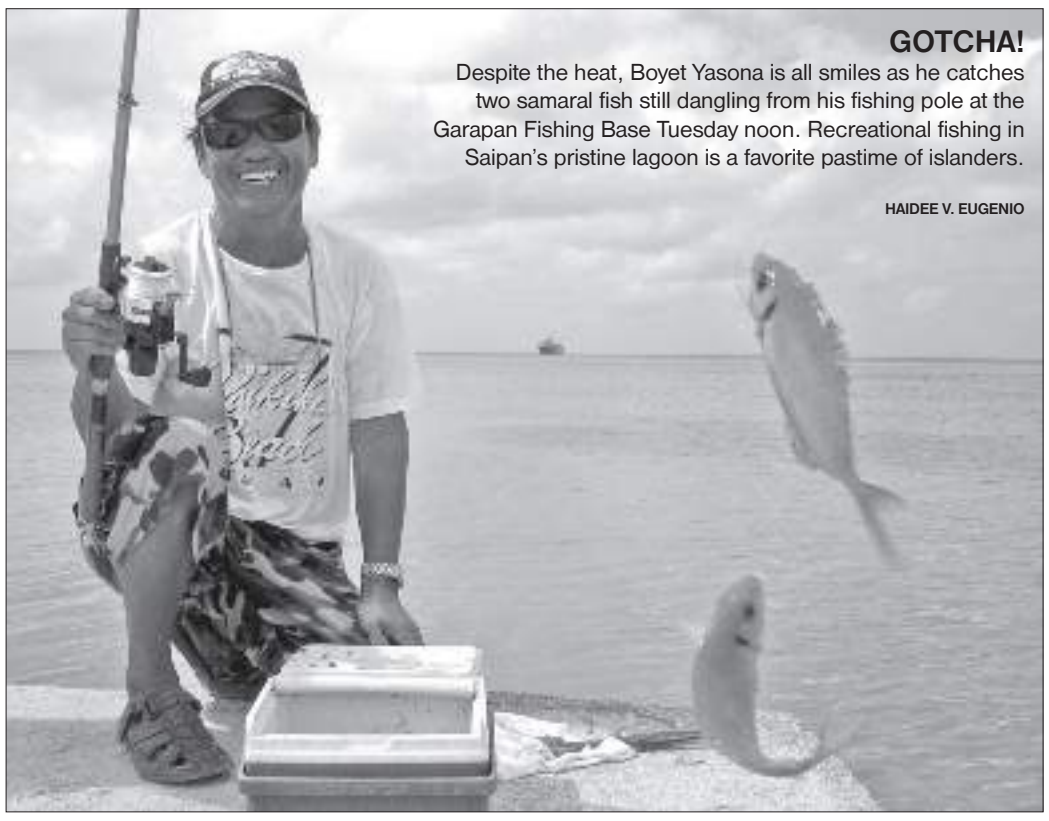
The Constitution defines a Northern Marianas descent as a person who is a citizen or national of the United States and who is at least one quarter Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian blood or a combination thereof or an adopted child of a person of Northern Marinas descent if adopted while under the age of 18.

A person shall be considered to be a full-blooded Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian if that person was born or domiciled in the NMI by 1950 and was citizen of the Trust Territory of the Pacific islands before the termination of the Trusteeship.

The ad hoc committee presented scenarios where someday some of the many high school graduates who attend universities would probably marry non-NMDs during or after graduation.

The child would be 50 percent NMD and if he marries non-NMD their children will have 25 percent bloodline and can own land in the CNMI.

However, if the grandchildren marry non-NMDs, their child will have at least 25 percent bloodline and will still be eligible.



GOTCHA!
Despite the heat, Boyet Yasona is all smiles as he catches two samaral fish still dangling from his fishing pole at the Garapan Fishing Base Tuesday noon. Recreational fishing in Saipan's pristine lagoon is a favorite pastime of islanders.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Senate's sergeant-at-arms arrested

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Police arrested a member of the Senate's sergeant-at-arms for allegedly verbally harassing a police sergeant and hitting another police officer along the side of a road on Capital Hill Monday midnight.

Jose Philip Sablan, 28, was arrested for assault and battery, resisting arrest, obstructing justice, and disturbing the peace.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said police detected a strong odor of alcohol coming from Sablan.

Ogumoro said that on Monday at 12:22am, while conducting routine patrol, police officers reported to DPS a domestic incident along the side of Isa Drive next to Sarah Market.

Preliminary investigation showed that a car was parked on the shoulder of the westbound lane with the driver's door open. A man, later identified as Sablan, was standing outside the driver's side. A woman was observed sitting and crying on the grass near Sablan.

Police officers separated Sablan and the woman in order to conduct a field investigation.

The woman refused to talk to the police officers. Sablan allegedly verbally harassed the police sergeant, who was interviewing him.

The police officer told Sablan to calm down. He, however, also allegedly harassed the officer and made verbal threats.

This prompted the police officer to arrest Sablan for obstruction of justice.

Sablan then allegedly resisted arrest, prompting the officer to use a pepper mace on him. Sablan then allegedly swung his arms, hitting the officer. Other officers helped control the suspect.

Sablan was eventually restrained and handcuffed after being sprayed with pepper mace again.

While being transported to the Department of Corrections, Sablan made threatening remarks to police officers, according to Ogumoro.

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Guam Vet Center to extend services to Saipan

The Guam Vet Center is making plans to extend its services to Saipan every month in an effort to address the needs of veterans residing in the CNMI.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Office of Military/ Veterans Affairs said the Guam Vet Center wants combat veterans in the CNMI to consider and include the center as a provider for their readjustment counseling needs.

"The Guam Vet Center is committed to providing quality readjustment services to returning war veterans," the statement says.

As part of this effort, the Guam Vet center will be hosting an information and counseling session for all combat veterans and their dependents on Jan. 28 and 29, at the Office of Military and Veterans Affair on Capital Hill, Building 1364.

Catherine Illarmo, the Department of Veterans Affairs' Team Leaders/LCSW from the Guam Vet Center, will be available on Jan. 28, 2009, from 9am to 4pm and on Jan. 29, 2009, from 9am to 12 noon.

"This opportunity is critical and it is important that the veterans attend in order to ensure services and the services the center plans to provide correspond with your needs," the statement said.

In additions to this, there will be a limited number of individual counseling appointments available. For those interested in counseling, call Illarmo at 1-671-472-7160/1 or Office of Military and Veteran Affairs executive officer Ruth Coleman at 664-2650. Date, time and place of the briefing is as follows:

- Jan. 28 9am-4pm, Office of Military/ Veterans affairs, Bldg. 1364
- Jan. 29 9am-12-noon at the Office of Military/ Veterans Affairs, Capitol Hill, Bldg 1364

Any questions or for further information, call Coleman at 664-2650. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Veterans' briefing

On Jan. 28, 2009, Gregory Reed, director of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Honolulu Hawaii, and David Larson, veteran service representative for Guam and the CNMI, will be on Saipan to give a briefing and survey of veterans' benefit needs. They will also be entertaining questions. The input of CNMI veterans is crucial for the establishment of a local Federal Veterans Benefit Office.

The briefing will be held Jan. 28, 2009, 9am-12 noon, at the Office of Military/ Veterans Affairs on Capital Hill, Building 1364. Any questions or further information, call Ruth Coleman at the Office of Military/ Veterans Affairs at 664-2650. ***(PR)***

Nepalese passport found

A community resident has found a Nepalese passport. Anyone who lost a Nepalese passport may contact 287-4536. ***(PR)***

Attention to families of Echo Company soldiers

The 9th MSC Family Programs Office is inviting dependents of deployed soldiers of Echo Company 100th BN 442nd and 368th MP Det. 1 for a *free* one-day Family Deployment Workshop and Youth Mini Camp on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009, at the Pacific Islands Club from 9am to 5pm. You must register no later than Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009. For more information or to register, contact Marcela Moody, Family Program Assistance at (671) 344-5012, Saipan RDO Maj. Gregorio Sablan at 322-6671 or FRG leader Rita L. Chargualaf at 322-7814. ***(PR)***

Tobacco vendors' workshop set

The Department of Commerce, Alcoholic Beverage and Tobacco Control Division and the Community Guidance Center, of the Department of Public Health, wishes to inform all Class-2 Retail Dealer license holders that there will be a Tobacco Merchant Education Workshop on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, from 8:30am to 11:30am at the Pacific Islands Club, Napu Room.

The workshop aims to educate the participants on the importance of reducing, if not eliminating, the use of tobacco products by youths in the CNMI. The program also targets updates of laws, and the critical issues of retail stores selling tobacco products and the emphasis in combating and preventing the use of tobacco products by minors under 18 years of age.

The workshop is limited to only 80 participants. To confirm one's participation or for more information, call the ABTC Division, David R. Maratita, at 664-3065, or the Community Guidance Center, Ed Camacho, at 323-6586. ***(PR)***

Attention to families with disabilities on Rota

The Family Hope Center under the CNMI Council for Developmental Disabilities and Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. would like to inform the community that the System Navigators would be traveling to Rota to conduct interviews and follow up(s) with families with disabilities on Jan. 22-23, 2009.

We are encouraging families with disabilities on Rota to contact NMPASI at 234-7273/4 for Frances Torres or Dorian Camacho or CNMI DD Council for Lillian Ada at 664-7005/7000 or cell phone no. 287-5643 for an appointment. ***(PR)***

DEQ brigade sets COP cleanup

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be picking up trash at Coral Ocean Point (Unai Dangkulo) on Feb. 7.

Thos who would like to volunteer may join the group on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 8am. Volunteers will clean until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

This month, outstanding brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 monthly cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three cleanups will receive a green brigade t-shirt.

The DEQ cleanup brigade began in 1996 and continues to maintain clean, healthy beaches.

For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

Marianas High School schedule

Jan. 29	3rd-4th Period Exams
Jan. 30	1st-2nd Period Exams
Feb. 2	No classes (PSS Professional Development)
Feb. 11	2nd Quarter Report Card Day/Open House, 4pm-6pm (student released at 1pm, parents pick up report cards from Homeroom teachers)
Feb. 16	No classes (President's Day)
Feb. 17	No classes (PSS Professional Development)
Feb. 27	Cultural Day, 9am-3pm MHS Campus, Open to the public

For questions and concerns, contact 237-3206. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-CHC-003

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 27, 2009 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

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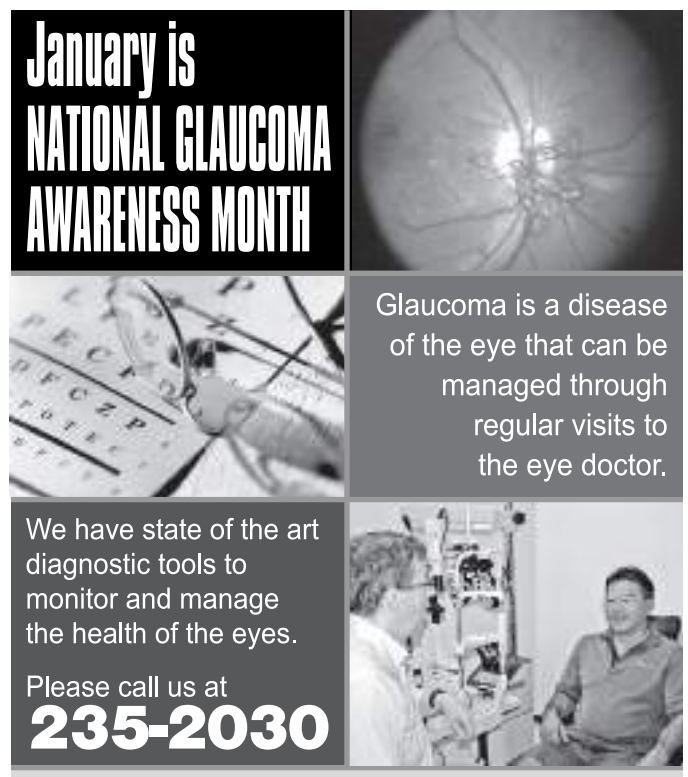
THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP ARE DUE ON **JANUARY 30, 2009, CLOSE OF BUSINESS** AND MUST BE ADDRESSED TO MR. JOSE A. ICHIHARA, MEDICAL SUPPLY OFFICER AT (670) 322-8980 OR FAXED TO (670) 322-8987. **A PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE** WILL BE HELD ON **FEBRUARY 04, 2009 AT 10:00 A.M.** AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S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STADT HAMBURG	028E	1/10 Sat	1/8 Thu	1/8 Thu	1/6 Tue	1/3 Sat	1/16 Fri	1/12 Mon	1/11 Sun	1/4 Sun	1/4 Sun	1/12 Mon	1/16 Fri	1/18 Sun	1/20 Tue
MELL SENOKO	016E	1/17 Sat	1/15 Thu	1/15 Thu	1/13 Tue	1/10 Sat	1/23 Fri	1/19 Mon	1/18 Sun	1/11 Sun	1/11 Sun	1/19 Mon	1/23 Fri	1/25 Sun	1/27 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	015E	1/24 Sat	1/22 Thu	1/22 Thu	1/20 Tue	1/17 Sat	1/30 Fri	1/26 Mon	1/25 Sun	1/18 Sun	1/18 Sun	1/26 Mon	1/30 Fri	2/1 Sun	2/3 Tue
STADT HAMBURG	029E	1/31 Sat	1/29 Thu	1/29 Thu	1/27 Tue	1/24 Sat	2/6 Fri	2/2 Mon	2/1 Sun	1/25 Sun	1/25 Sun	2/2 Mon	2/6 Fri	2/8 Sun	2/10 Tue
MELL SENOKO	017E	2/7 Sat	2/5 Thu	2/5 Thu	2/3 Tue	1/31 Sat	2/13 Fri	2/9 Mon	2/8 Sun	2/1 Sun	2/1 Sun	2/9 Mon	2/13 Fri	2/15 Sun	2/17 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	016E	2/14 Sat	2/12 Thu	2/12 Thu	2/10 Tue	2/7 Sat	2/20 Fri	2/16 Mon	2/15 Sun	2/8 Sun	2/8 Sun	2/16 Mon	2/20 Fri	2/22 Sun	2/24 Tue

Inbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETA Guam	ETD Guam	ETA Saipan	ETA Yap	ETA Koror	ETA GenSan	ETA Davao	ETA Cebu	ETA Hongkong	ETA Kaoshiung	ETA Busan	ETA Yokohama	ETA Manila	ETA Singapore
STADT HAMBURG	028E	1/24 Sat	1/25 Sun	1/25 Sun	SKIP	1/29 Thu	1/31 Sat	2/1 Sun	2/3 Tue	2/6 Fri	2/7 Sat	2/12 Thu	3/3 Tue	3/1 Sun	2/11 Wed
MELL SENOKO	016E	1/31 Sat	2/1 Sun	2/1 Sun	2/3 Tue	2/5 Thu	2/7 Sat	2/8 Sun	2/10 Tue	2/13 Fri	2/14 Sat	2/19 Thu	3/10 Tue	3/8 Sun	2/18 Wed
MELL SENTOSA	015E	2/7 Sat	2/8 Sun	2/8 Sun	SKIP	2/12 Thu	2/14 Sat	2/15 Sun	2/17 Tue	2/20 Fri	2/21 Sat	2/26 Thu	3/17 Tue	3/15 Sun	2/25 Wed
STADT HAMBURG	029E	2/14 Sat	2/15 Sun	2/15 Sun	2/17 Tue	2/19 Thu	2/22 Sun	2/23 Mon	2/25 Wed	2/27 Fri	2/28 Sat	3/5 Thu	3/24 Tue	3/22 Sun	3/4 Wed
MELL SENOKO	017E	2/21 Sat	2/22 Sun	2/22 Sun	SKIP	2/26 Thu	2/28 Sat	3/1 Sun	3/4 Wed	3/6 Fri	3/7 Sat	3/12 Thu	3/31 Tue	3/29 Sun	3/11 Wed
MELL SENTOSA	016E	2/28 Sat	3/1 Sun	3/1 Sun	3/3 Tue	3/5 Thu	3/7 Sat	3/8 Sun	3/10 Tue	3/13 Fri	3/14 Sat	3/19 Thu	4/7 Tue	4/5 Sun	3/18 Wed

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US govt may provide help after waves pummel Marshalls, FSM

MAJURO (AFP)—The United States may provide emergency aid to two former Pacific territories after high waves hit low lying areas of the two atoll nations late last month, officials said.

US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials are touring the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia this week assessing damage from the high waves that hit homes and crops and displaced hundreds of people.

Two FEMA inspectors left late Sunday with Marshall Islands Disaster Office authorities on a 14-day trip to assess the damage that prompted both the Marshalls and Micronesian governments to declare a state of emergency last month.

"Food crops are a big concern," said Marshall Islands government Chief Secretary Casten Nemra, saying many areas around the country were inundated by salt water.

"We're witnessing signs of problems with food crops."

Australia and Taiwan have provided assistance to the two countries since the flooding.

Bart Deemer, a US Agency for International Development (USAID) official based in the Marshall Islands, said Sunday that US aid would be decided after the inspection by officials.

Much of the land in the Marshall Islands is little more than one metre (yard) above sea level.

Joseph Kevin Villagomez, Health Secretary of the US administered Northern Mariana Islands, told a conference of Pacific Island health leaders in Majuro Monday that the flooding highlighted the need for more planning to deal with climate change.

"We're seeking the impacts of climate change in the Pacific region," Villagomez said at the opening of the conference.

"What happened in the Marshall Islands last month happened to some extent in each of our countries."

Search and rescue switch to digital on Feb. 1

Starting Feb. 1 2009, the U.S. Coast Guard and other rescue agencies will only receive distress alerts broadcasting the digital 406 MHz signal, according to a USCG notice issued yesterday.

The 121.5/243 MHz satellite system will be shut down and the U.S. Coast Guard will no longer receive Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons that broadcast on Class A, B, and S 121.5/243 MHz.

EPIRBs are portable radio beacons designed to alert the Coast Guard of a vessel's or aircraft's position in the event of an emergency. They have helped to save 24,500 lives worldwide since 1982.

One of the main benefits of using the 406 MHz EPIRB is that it is 50 times more powerful than the legacy analog 121.5/243 MHz beacon that boaters have been using for many years. Also, 406 MHz EPIRBs broadcast a unique code that identifies each vessel.

In general, U.S. commercial fishing vessels, uninspected passenger vessels that carry six or more people, and uninspected commercial vessels are required to carry an EPIRB. To determine whether one needs to carry an EPIRB, consult the specific requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations.

"Regardless of whether you need one or not the Coast Guard strongly encourages you to have a 406 registered EPRIB if you operate a vessel or aircraft in a remote area such as the waters off of Guam," said the Coast Guard.

To prevent false activations, the old 121.5/243 MHz beacons should be made inoperable, either by removing their batteries and, if possible, returning it to the manufacturer, or by demolishing it. If a beacon is to be returned to the manufacturer with the battery still installed, it should be wrapped in tin foil to prevent transmission of signals during shipment.

"Please inform the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration/United States Mission Control Center if you sell or dispose of a registered 406 MHz beacon," said the Coast Guard.

Proper registration of an EPIRB will make it much more effective during an emergency. When a 406 MHz beacon signal is received, search and rescue personnel can retrieve information from a registration database. This includes the beacon owner's contact information, emergency contact information, and the vessel's identifying characteristics.

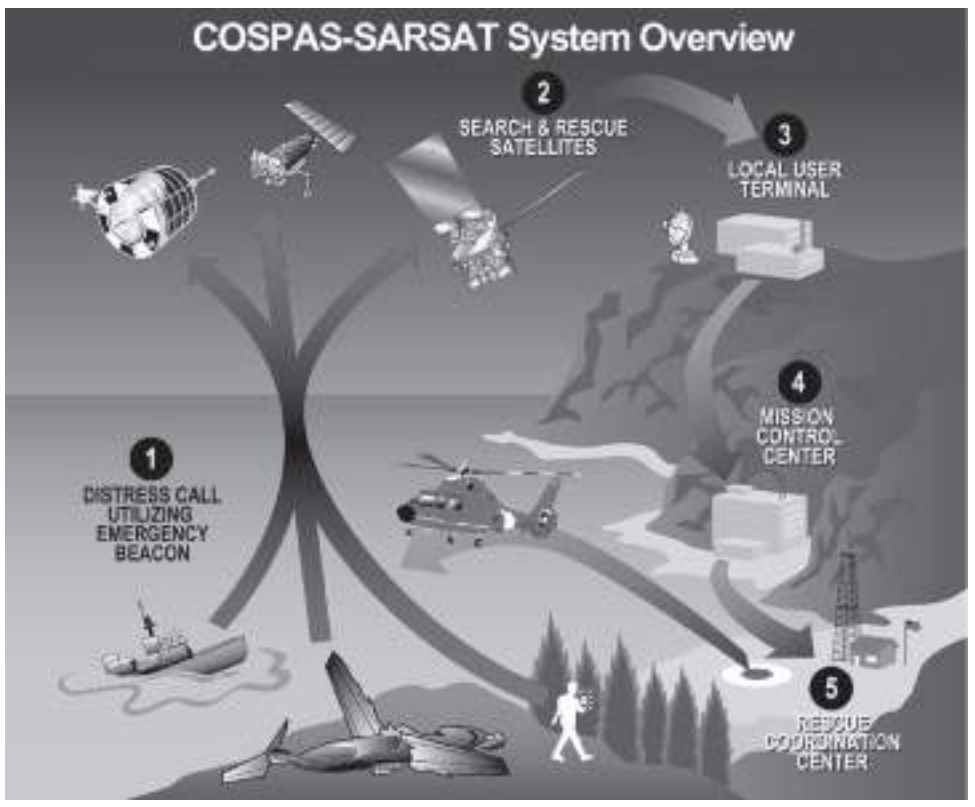
EPIRBs fall into two categories: Category I units are designed to float free from a sinking boat and will automatically activate themselves; Category II units must be manually activated by someone on the vessel. There are new units on the market that now include built-in Global Positioning System receivers. The GPS-EPIRBs broadcast more accurate position information about the vessel.

NOAA maintains a database for EPRIB registrations. In the event a beacon is triggered, the contact information is used to call the owner's home or business. This information is critical for search and rescue coordinators to find those in distress as quickly as possible. Properly registered EPIRBs can significantly take the search out of search and rescue.

"Mariners can greatly increase their chances of being rescued by having a 406 MHz beacon with current contact information on the beacon registration web site," said Lee Putnam Search and Rescue Specialist at CG Sector Guam.

To register an EPIRB, visit: www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov/ or call 1-888-212-SAVE. Registrations must be updated at least every two years or when contact information changes.

The Coast Guard strongly urges all who work and play on the water to keep proper safety equipment onboard their vessels at all times. Coast Guard-approved life jackets, flares, fire extinguishers, and a VHF-FM radio are just a few examples of life-saving equipment every boater should own. ***(USCG)***



Fiji flood damage estimate reaches $55M

SUVA, Fiji (Fijilive/PIR)—The cost of damages brought by floods in the past week has now reached $54.9 million, [US$30.3 million] according to preliminary assessments by Fiji government officials.

Figures are expected to skyrocket when the final assessments/survey reports are provided by the commissioners in the four divisions and their teams.

"The incidents of unrelenting flooding caused by heavy downpour in the past weeks is considered to be the worst ever in Fiji's history, worse than the flooding caused by the natural disasters of 1956,1972 and 1999," said interim Minister for Provincial Development Ratu Epeli Nailatikau while addressing a press conference in Suva today.

"Life must go on," he adds.

According to figures obtained at mid-day yesterday, in the Public Works sector, the damages to water and sewerage stands at $8.5m [US$4.7 million] and roads $15m [US$8.3 million].

For Agriculture, the estimated damage amounted to $26.3m, [US$14.5 million] Education $2.3m, Health $520,000 and Fiji Electricity Authority $2.3m.

In regards to Government assistance, Ratu Epeli said the rehabilitation phase has begun.

He said food rations have been routinely supplied to all nominated and listed evacuation centres as part of the initial response initiatives.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 21, 1999

CNMI upbeat on talks

Meetings between the Northern Marianas and the United States continued yesterday with discussions focusing on reforms put in place by the Commonwealth to improve its immigration, labor and customs policies. Negotiators from both governments spent the whole morning of the second day of informal talks exchanging views while Labor and Immigration Secretary Mark D. Zachares briefed Washington officials about the efforts being undertaken by the local government to curb entry of guest workers and address labor problems The continued dependence of the island economy on guest workers is troubling the US, the commonwealth's main economic provider, because of a host of problems spawned by employing non-residents.

Japan travels may edge slightly up

The largest travel wholesaler in Japan has projected a 0.1 percent increase in overseas Japanese travel for this year compared to 1998 brought about by the expected strong demand from family and middle age group travelers who were apparently less affected by the recession. Japan Travel Bureau Inc., estimates domestic travel to increase by 0.5 percent or a total of 320,320,000 over the previous year. JTB has two affiliate agencies operating in the Northern Marianas—Pacific Micronesia Inc. and Tasi Tours. This year, Tasi Tours projects a 10 percent drop in tourist haul from Japan this year compared to 1998 as consumers remain gloomy because of the ongoing recession.

JANUARY 21, 2000

Superior Court orders Kara to step down

The Superior Court yesterday ordered Acting Attorney General Maya B. Kara to give up her post because her continued stay in office is a violation of the CNMI Constitution. In a 25-page decision, Judge Pro Tem Joaquin V. E. Manibusan Jr. asked Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio to immediately appoint an AGO with the advice and consent of the Senate. The court emphasized that the governor has no authority to appoint an Acting Attorney General. However, Tenorio may appoint a nominee to the position of the Attorney General who shall either be confirmed or rejected by the Senate within the allotted time period.

Fitial to press for tax cuts, repeal of anti-business laws

In a bid to promote an attractive business atmosphere on the island, House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial yesterday vowed to pursue a package of economic reforms, including tax cuts and repeal of laws deemed impediment to enticing both local and foreign investors. He called for support of the business community and the public to carry out these reforms which he said are necessary to ensure economic growth for the Northern Marianas amid threats of federal takeover. Speaking before a meeting of the CNMI Bar Association, Mr. Fitial said the House of Representatives will conduct public hearings and consult with government officials, business leaders and other experts in laying down the plan.

JANUARY 21, 2002

Babauta sets sight on 1M tourists

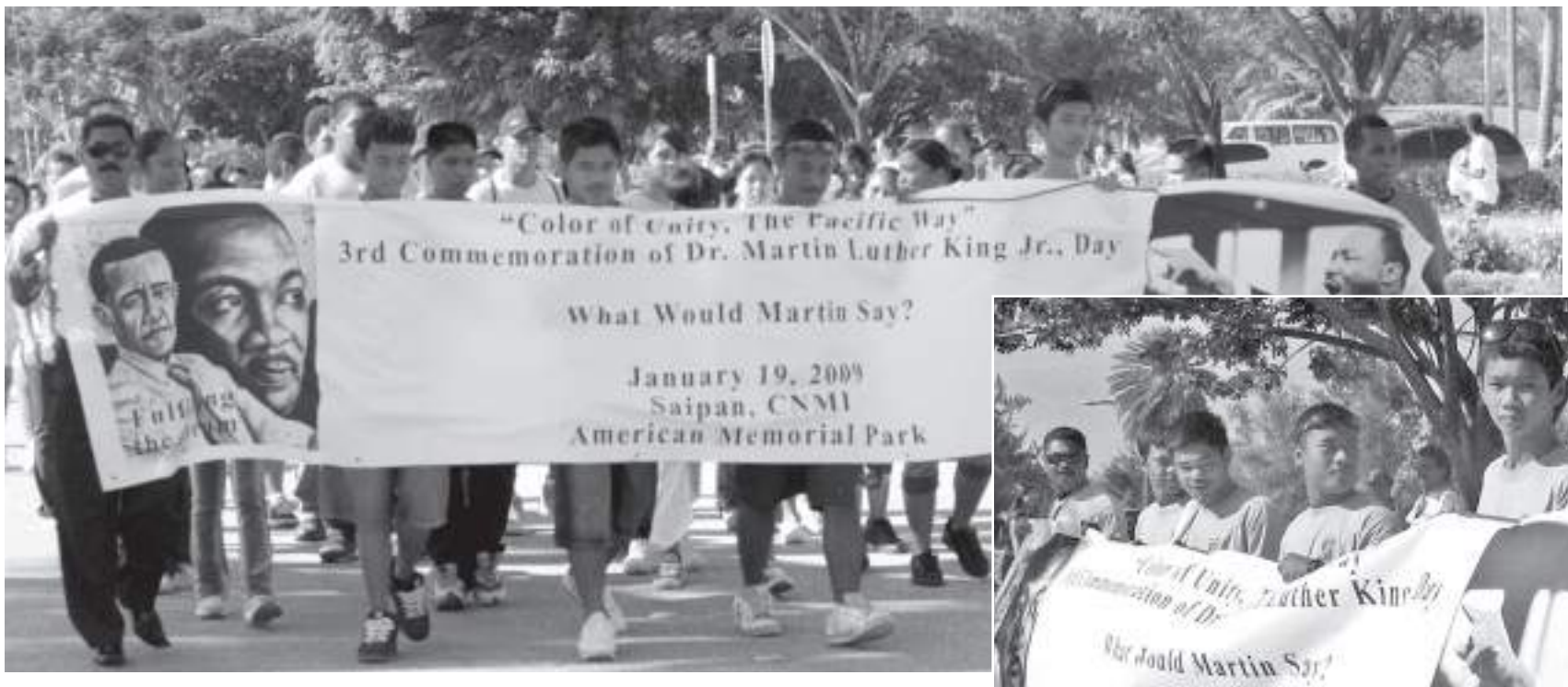
Gov. Juan N. Babauta has set for himself the tough task of bringing tourist arrivals in the Commonwealth back up to 700,000 yearly within four years through aggressive marketing.

The new Governor made this vow during a speech he delivered at the Installation Dinner of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce Friday night. Playing on the acronym of the Marianas Visitors Authority, Babauta said that, by marketing very aggressively, the end of his four-year term will see visitor arrival numbers back up to 700,000 "and on their way to one million." Recent data obtained from the MVA estimates that around 400,000 tourists visited the CNMI last year.

It's a cloud, it's a mist. No, it's dust in Tanapag

Huge clouds of dust that appeared like grey smoke billowing from the machine being used to treat the PCB-laced soil in Tanapag continue to plague residents in the area, despite an earlier promise by the machine's operator to resolve the problem. This came even as the proof of performance test that was supposed to be conducted on the treated soil was postponed anew due to maintenance problems. Project engineer Allen Beaudin said they decided to postpone the scheduled proof of performance test for the indirect thermal desorption treated soil due to a broken hose on the machine.

Island Snapshots


"Color of Unity, The Pacific Way"
3rd Commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Day
What Would Martin Say?
January 19, 2009
Saipan, CNMI
American Memorial Park

Right, students hold up a banner as they re-enact the civil rights march started by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the MLK Day celebration Monday. The mini march started from the American Memorial Park via Beach Road and back.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

CIVIL RIGHTS MINI-MARCH

Students carry a banner with a photo of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during a civil rights mini-march Monday in Garapan as part of the CNMI's third commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Garapan Elementary School students participate Monday in the civil rights mini-march held from the American Memorial Park to Garapan and back as part of the CNMI's third commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama.

Garapan Elementary School student Joseph Yanto, from Mrs. Demapan's class, won the MLK essay writing competition.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Garapan Elementary School students Lourdes Ocaya and Ellio Manglona hold up their MLK banner at the start of the mini-march held Monday in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

IMMIGRATION ADVISER

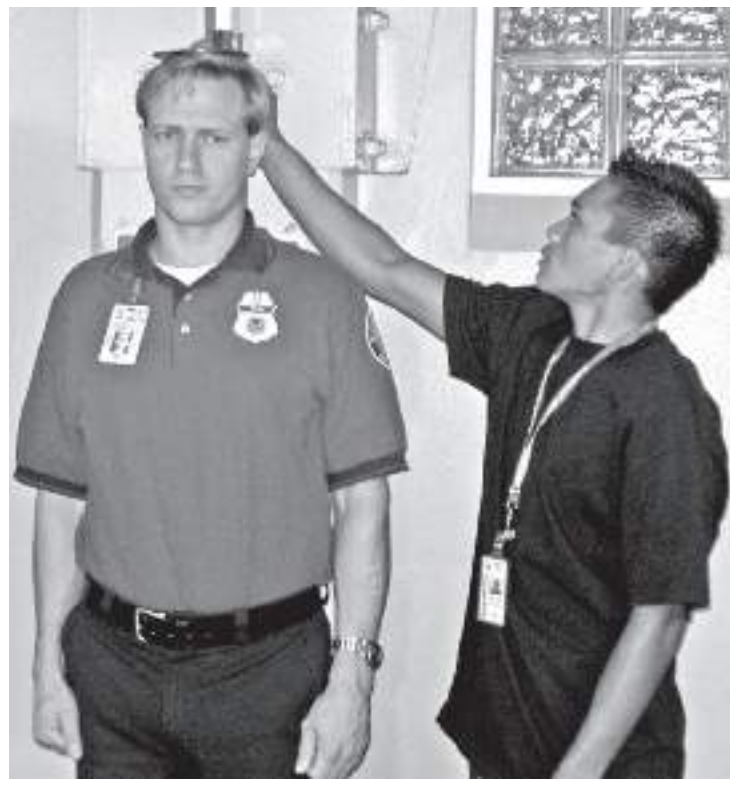
Alex Hartman, an immigration policy advisor at the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Policy, explains the Guam-CNMI visa waiver to government officials, business leaders and community members Friday at the American Memorial Park's Visitors' Center.

KRISTI EATON

HEALTH SCREENING

A volunteer measures the height of a Transportation Security Administration employee Wednesday last week as part of the health screening process jointly organized by the Marianas Health Services, Community Guidance Center, Pacific Wellness Center and the CNMI Diabetes Prevention and Control Program.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.



BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT

Birthday greetings go out to Patty "Girl" Aldan Cepeda, who is celebrating her 10th birthday today, Jan. 21, 2009. Many blessings from your family on Saipan and from your mom, dad and your brother Jr. at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

National Day of Service: The President-elect's call to action

On Monday, the nation honored the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a man whose tireless quest for equality and justice helped to make possible today's historic inauguration of the first African American as president of the United States. Monday's holiday was meant to be a day of national service, a day when a grateful nation emulates Dr. King's sacrifice and service to others so that they may know a better life. It is in that spirit that President-elect Barack Obama has called on Americans to give back by tapping the enthusiasm of the millions who flocked to his candidacy and propelled him to the White House.

"We already have several million people already signed up through thousands of sites that were organized through our Web site," Mr. Obama told us during a visit Thursday, which would have been Dr. King's 80th birthday. "We provide them with a package of resources, and they run with it." Some of the activities taking place across the United States include making care packages for troops serving overseas, collecting food for and serving meals to the homeless, cleaning neighborhoods, parks and waterways, and building affordable housing.

But the next president doesn't envision this call to service as a one-day event. He is intent on creating a culture of service. "Part of my message in every speech I hope that I give over the next four years is that government can't do everything and everyone has a role," Mr. Obama said.

The new administration is committed to expanding the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps, the 16-year-old organization administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. It plans to create service organizations to get people to actively participate in finding solutions to the problems facing the country. There will be specific entities for those interested in energy independence, education, health-care reform and help for veterans. Mr. Obama has set a goal of 50 hours of community service per year for middle and high school students. To encourage 100 hours of service per year from college students, Mr. Obama proposes a $4,000 tax credit for their education. And he pledges to improve volunteer programs aimed at senior citizens.

Dr. King once said, "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." We encourage you to visit www.mlkday.gov to find a project that could use your greatness.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Let's look on the bright side

The only way to take control of your life, raise your standard of living and move beyond merely surviving is to create your own unique product or service that you offer to increasing numbers of people in exchange for the things of value that you desire. This simple formula applies to countries as well as people. A self-sufficient economy has its own products or services of value to export to the world. Similarly, a self-sufficient individual has something of value to exchange in the global marketplace. That thing of value is based on your natural talent, skill, or interest—in other words, your passion!

THE SAIPANPRENEUR PROJECT *Creating economic success for the CNMI*

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.

I believe that the Universe is perfect. In other words, when faced with what appears to be adversity, I remind myself that reality is often what you believe it to be, and, as Napoleon Hill said, "Every adversity, failure, and heartache carries with it the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit." However, you have to look for it. The paradox is that unless you first believe Mr. Hill's statement to be true, you will never find that equivalent benefit. To find it, you must, to use a trite phrase: look on the bright side.

But, what does it mean to "look on the bright side?" It doesn't mean we roll over and passively accept the things we don't like. We can still launch a response in protest, and struggle to right perceived wrongs. It doesn't mean we don't acknowledge the direness of a situation. But it also doesn't mean we don't plan for what may be otherwise inevitable.

So let's apply this to something close to home. Let's pretend that we live in a land where some new law or regulation is being considered that will affect the local economy and everyone's livelihood. You know, just hypothetically speaking.

In any such affront to one's self-determination, the affected person, group, community or nation has several different options for response. In choosing *my* response, the question I would ask myself is, "Given that it appears there is a plan afoot that seems to march forward despite our protestations, what is my best course of action?" Any course of action comes with a distinct set of possible consequences.

Of sheep, soldiers and sowers

In response, one can submit, or one can protest and struggle. But each one alone has its flaws: Those who simply submit without struggle become like sheep to be led by the will of others. Those who merely protest without an alternate plan of action ("Plan B") shall be caught woefully unprepared should the struggle not go their way.

Devising that alternate plan of action is the third tactic. I call it "sowing new seeds."

But just as there are consequences to the lone strategies of submission and protest, those who only develop "plan B" (i.e. sowing new seeds), without doing a little fighting to create an alternate outcome of their choosing, miss the opportunity for self-determination that comes with struggle.

I suggest, therefore, that all three responses are necessary. One must proceed through life with a certain amount of acceptance of what is, a certain amount of protest to right perceived wrongs, and a certain amount of new seed sowing, so that one is not caught unprepared in the future.

Therefore, it would be important to devise alternate plans of action in order to survive the impact of the passage of that hypothetical new law.

Town criers, rabble rousers and seed-sowers

Every role a choice

In responding to that hypothetical new, unpopular law or regulation, some shall whine, some shall agitate, while some shall seek alternatives. As a free individual, I have the right to choose which strategy I feel more inclined to follow. Not everyone can, or should be protesting. Not everyone can, or should be agitating. Similarly, not everyone can or should be planning new strategy. Each response is a necessary role in the grand scheme of things, and for which different people are more or less suited.

And, when you judge my chosen response, remember:

I am not a "whiner" if I choose to voice my discontent. Someone needs to do it. I have simply chosen my role.

I am not an "agitator" if I choose to protest in the face of that same threat. Someone needs to do it. I have simply chosen my role.

I am not a "Pollyanna" if I choose to sow new seeds in the face of the threat. Someone needs to do it. I have simply chosen my role.

The poet in me prefers to think of the whiners as "town-criers"; the agitators as "rabble rousers," and the Pollyannas as "seed-sowers."

What I would do

So, if I were organizing a campaign to launch a response to some new idea, trend, regulation or law that I felt was *not* in my best interest, I would:

1. Assign people to the role of town-crier. Those people would write on blogs, comment on others' blogs, submit letters to editors, and webmasters, submit comments and write position statements, and make sure they get in the hands of the appropriate agencies, government officials, and most importantly, the local, national and international media. (That last group is vitally important, since a public outcry heard around the world brings coverage that may make certain activities harder to push through silently.)

Now, just a note: Town-criers should not debate other town-criers.

See LET'S on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Four days?

By STEPHEN B. SMITH
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Stephen B. Smith is the Accreditation, Language Arts, and National Forensic League coordinator for the Public School System Central Office.

It is not set in stone, but with the Legislature considering more austerity days for some Commonwealth employees, and reduced budgets for many of its agencies, PSS may at some point be looking at a four-day school week. Do I hear loud yeas and hoorays from our students out there in Readerville? Hold on there, boys and girls. The week may get shortened, but the hours per day will be lengthened. A good thing or a bad thing?

I ran this question by a few students the other day—all high schoolers—and they uniformly thought the longer school day might be worth it, i.e., having a new standard three-day weekend. I can understand that. Most adults live for those kinds of mini-vacations, so why would not the students as well. So then, what are the upsides and downsides of a four-day school week should it indeed ever be implemented.

Upsides: With CUC costs so high and other peripheral costs cutting into an almost obscenely low PSS budget, a four-day week would seem a great idea. It would reduce PSS costs significantly. Students would, according to my totally unscientific and infinitesimal survey, love the four-day plan. Parents? Parents at first blush would probably love it, too. Students would still be getting out of school earlier than would their parents from their jobs, and so little disruption is anticipated overall in that area. And how about teachers and PSS admin-staff? It would appear on the surface that it would work for them as it would for the students. So let's hear it for the shorter workweek and the new mini-vacation school schedule. Hooray! Or…

Downsides: Are projected costs savings enough to justify such a change? Ummm, maybe no. It would indeed be a sign to our Legislature that the school district was being proactive and perhaps persuade some legislators, not already on board, to perhaps "not" cut PSS anymore than it already has, but even that is iffy. The Legislature is nervous, as is the Executive Branch. Projected collections are low and sparing any agency, even a proactive PSS, is probably not in the cards. Of course that is pure speculation at this point. And the students?

While considering the extra day of fun and frolic, the students I talked with had not given any thought to the long days they would have to endure on the days that school was in session. It is a maxim universally accepted that the tougher subjects, e.g., Hard Sciences, Language Arts, Math, be not taught in the afternoons. Reason? Students are burned up and out by then. Ballroom Dancing maybe, PE, Glass Making, or Culinary Arts; but trying to explain why the "square root of Pi times the cosine of a times b" is somehow fundamental to the progress of Western man is not happening! Not late in the day at any rate. In a four-day schedule the hardcore stuff would likely be squished.

And the parents? This one is iffy. Students would be home at least one of the general workdays of their parents. Would this be a good thing or a bad thing? Younger students would need some kind of care and monitoring on that extra day. Older students, just the monitoring. Well, you can see why it would be an iffy benefit if a benefit at all.

The prime solution of course would be to increase PSS funding and toss out any notion of austerity or fundamental changes in scheduling of school days. In support of this last, I offer the words of Ronald Reagan our former President: "Education is the only industry that can never cost more than it returns to the community." So, please, legislators, think about it.

The dream this Jan. 20

By MARTIN LUTHER KING III
Special to The Washington Post

The writer is president and CEO of the nonprofit group Realizing the Dream.

Forty-five years ago, my father, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., proclaimed his dream for America "that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed."

His words, spoken in Lincoln's shadow on Aug. 28, 1963, will echo profoundly on Jan. 20, 2009. The ideals that Abraham Lincoln and my father championed will advance when Barack Obama takes the presidential oath of office.

In the years since that march on Washington, our nation has come much farther than the two miles that separate the Lincoln Memorial from the Capitol. Martin Luther King Jr. would be extraordinarily proud of Mr. Obama for becoming the nation's first black president. Perhaps more important, he would be proud of the America that elected him.

As I watched events unfold on Election Day at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta—where my father was co-pastor—I was overcome not only by the jubilation that enveloped the church but also by a deep sense of pride and triumph. Of course I shared in what felt like a national catharsis. But for me, Mr. Obama's victory was intensely personal.

I was 10 years old when my father was assassinated. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his life to break down barriers in our country's struggle for equality. He gave his life fighting to give all of us a chance to realize his dream.

On the dawn of this historic inauguration, I have reflected on the times that my father and I were able to share together. Even as a child, I knew that he was doing something big, though I was not quite sure of the magnitude. I've remembered the time I was teased by classmates who called my father a "jailbird." When I came home from school in tears, my mother told me that "your father goes to jail to make the world a better place for all God's children." I went back to school with a new sense of pride.

I've thought about the amusement park I so desperately wanted to go to but couldn't because of segregation. My father assured me that one day I'd be able to. I quantified success like any young boy; I knew my father's work must be bettering the world if it would eventually allow me to ride the bumper cars.

In the days since Mr. Obama's election, I have often been asked whether I thought I would live to see a black man become president. My answer—yes—often surprises. But if my father were alive today, he would answer the same way. Without that faith and that sense of possibility, he would have had no reason to fight in the first place.

As bright a day as Nov. 4 was in our nation's history, it is important to remember that Barack Obama's election is not a panacea for race relations in this country. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, yet segregation ran rampant for a hundred years. Blacks were given the right to vote in 1965, but it took 43 years for an African American to rise to the nation's highest office. Though it carries us further down the path toward equality, Barack Obama's election does not render my father's dream realized.

Mr. Obama will have the opportunity and the duty to pick up the mantle of Abraham Lincoln, of Lyndon Johnson, of Bobby Kennedy—and of Martin Luther King Jr. Yet this duty is not Obama's alone. We must all embrace this dream as our civic responsibility. For it to function effectively, we must all take an active role in our democracy and champion the cause that is the common good.

I have dedicated my adult life to continuing my father's work and to perpetuating his legacy. In five years, the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington will be upon us. As we prepare to celebrate a new page in American history Tuesday, let us pledge to reduce the poverty rate 20 percent by the time that milestone arrives.

Let us promote community building by funding programs that promote service to our most impoverished regions and let us embrace nonviolent resolutions to all conflicts, domestic and international.

I have faith that the American people and the leadership of President Obama will usher in the day when all of us—black and white, rich and poor, young and old—stand together and work to realize my father's dream.

LET'S

From Page 10

Their goal is to spread the word outside *of the immediate community. Your letters are not intended to stir up controversy* within *the community, but to call attention from* outside *the community to expose what's happening within the community. Don't let them bait you.*

2. Assign people to the role of rabble-rouser. Rabble rousers organize protests, sit-ins, marches, letter-writing campaigns and publicity stunts to create a story. They become the public personification, and the face of the movement. They appear on television and radio and the press in support of the cause.

3. Assign people to the role of seed-sower. These people plan what we will do if the activities of the town criers and the rabble rousers don't bear the fruit we envision. They answer the question "*How shall we survive, and what will we do if things don't go our way?*" Seed-sowers are the ones who will find the "seeds of an equivalent or greater benefit" in what others are "crying" and rabble-rowsing about. To do that, ahem, they need to look at the bright side. Now, do you get it?

Then, with all of us acknowledged to be on the same page, fighting for the same cause, we stop the infighting and direct our efforts appropriately and align with the forces that can really effect the changes or maintain the constancy we seek.

Totally unrelated

So, in completely unrelated news: the new Visa Waiver Program that will affect the CNMI is scheduled to effect June 1, 2009. According to the text on www.regulations.gov, "*The following countries are designated for participation in the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program: Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) passport and Hong Kong identification card is required), Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom.*"

Many people are fearful that the exclusion of China and Russia from thislist is bad news for the CNMI. But...

On the bright side, we will be forced to focus on new markets, which might prove more profitable, and a better fit in the long run.

On the bright side, visitors from China and Russia can still come here after June 1—albeit with a little more paperwork and hassle, which means...

On the bright side, we will have to raise the quality of the tourist experience here in the CNMI so as to compete with Guam and to make it a place worth visiting.

On the bright side, there appears to be the flexibility to revisit the issue, and re-instate China and Russia some time in the future.

On the bright side, with the new Obama administration comes a new head of DHS (Department of Homeland Security), and the need for funding to be approved.

Final word

There is a confluence of events here in this region that includes:

- Mariana Trench Monument
- Visa Waiver Program/Tightening Immigration policies
- Ongoing "Federalization"
- Article 12 re-vote in 2011
- Military buildup
- Departure of garment factories
- Departure of residents to mainland/Guam

These are just a few of the trends, intentions and movements which promise to change the livelihoods, lifestyle, economy and future of this region. The final outcomes of some of these trends may be close to inevitable. But just maybe, with the right strategy, they may be changeable, or at the very least, there may be a seed of an equivalent or greater benefit to be found. Choose a role.

***Note:** *If you're a rabble rouser having trouble accessing the dhs.gov site, visit www.regulations.gov, download a copy of the regulations (Docket #: USCBP-2009-0001) and submit comments. You may also submit comments by registered mail. (According to the regulations.gov website, "All public comments received are then reviewed by that Department or Agency and taken into account when the final regulation is developed.")*

According to the Saipan Tribune*, comments about the Visa Waiver regulations can be mailed during the next 60 days to: Border Security Regulations branch, Office of International Trade, Customs and Border Protection, Mint Annes 799 9th Street, NW, Washington DC 20001*

And, if you're a Pollyanna, stay tuned. You never know what new ideas may be announced here in this column that may speak of opportunity for you and yours!

***Note**: For more tips on overcoming your fears, acting on your ideas, changing the game, and creating a passion-centered lifestyle, visit www.passionprofit.com!*

■ ■ ■

Until next week, remember, success is a journey, not a destination!

Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 12 books including Turn Your Passion Into Profit*. Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now makes his home here in Saipan. To learn more about the Saipanpreneur Project and Walt's philosophy and formula visit www.saipanpreneur.com and www.pasionprofit.com*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°

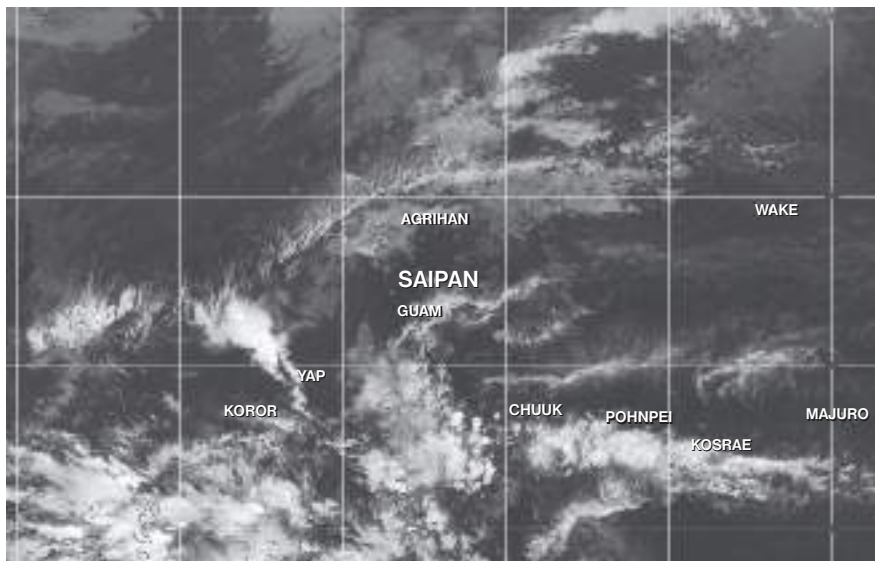
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲83	▼75
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲88	▼78
Pohnpei	Showers	▲84	▼77
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Showers	▲83	▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲73	▼63
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲46	▼14
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲73	▼64
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲71	▼66
London	Cloudy	▲41	▼34
Los Angeles	Showers	▲68	▼52
Manila	Showers	▲86	▼74
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲85	▼70
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲60	▼42
New York	Partly Sunny	▲28	▼21
Osaka	Showers	▲47	▼39
Paris	Cloudy	▲36	▼32
Pusan	Rain	▲54	▼32
Rome	Cloudy	▲52	▼37
Salem	Cloudy	▲49	▼31
San Francisco	Showers	▲59	▼47
Seoul	Flurries	▲43	▼22
Tokyo	Showers	▲47	▼43
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲34	▼25

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, JAN. 20, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough extends from 10N130E to 20N138E ending at 25N142E south of Iwo To. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found east of the trough axis northwest of Yap within 50 miles of a line from 13N133E to 9N137E. A near-equatorial trough south of Koror extends eastward from 2N130E to EQ138E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found within 170 miles north of the equator. A weak surface trough aided by upper-level diffluence is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms bounded by a line from 4N141E to 7N148E to 3N149E to 2N142E back to 4N141E. Trade-wind convergence in generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms just south of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae within 90 miles of a line from 6N152E to 3N170E. A second area of trade-wind convergence producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms extends from 3N173E to 3N and the dateline. This area is south of Majuro.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
6:11 AM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
10:02 AM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
3:02 PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
11:11 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Sunday	6:47 AM	6:12 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:30 AM	1:53 PM
Thursday	3:23 AM	2:42 PM
Friday	4:14 AM	3:33 PM
Saturday	5:03 AM	4:25 PM
Sunday	5:50 AM	5:17 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Swearing-in in poetry

By MEGHAN DAUM
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

This time last year, on the snowy campaign trail in New Hampshire, Hillary Rodham Clinton took a swipe at her opponent Barack Obama with the quip, "You campaign in poetry, but you govern in prose."

As it turns out, the president-elect's first day of governing will include some poetry. Following a tradition (of sorts) started by John F. Kennedy, who invited Robert Frost to write and recite a poem at his presidential inauguration, Obama chose Elizabeth Alexander, a 46-year-old poet, essayist, playwright and Yale professor, as his inaugural poet.

Alexander, who's known for blending historical and cultural themes into language described as both intellectual and jazz-inspired, was notified of her selection in mid-December. That gave her about a month to come up with something worthy of the occasion and accessible (or at least not mystifying) to the estimated 1.5 million people who will converge on the Capitol, and the billions who may watch and listen worldwide.

And you thought writing a toast for your friend's wedding was stressful.

Percy Bysshe Shelley concluded his 1821 essay "A Defence of Poetry" with the oft-cited line "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." But what do acknowledged legislators know about poetry? In some cases, more than you'd think.

Bill Clinton, who chose Maya Angelou for his first inauguration and fellow Arkansan Miller Williams for his second, is an avid poetry reader. Three volumes of verse, including Seamus Heaney's "The Cure at Troy," a poetic translation of Sophocles' "Philoctetes," were on his list of favorite books compiled in 2003 for the opening of the Clinton Library.

George W. Bush, for his part, chose not to include a poet at his inaugurations, but Laura Bush may have inspired more poems than all the presidential administrations put together. In 2003, the first lady canceled a White House symposium on "Poetry and the American Voice" when too many of the invited poets wrote works protesting the war in Iraq. The resulting firestorm gave birth to Poets Against the War, an archive of more than 20,000 anti-war poems, an anthology and several ancillary peace organizations.

Poetry's popularity 'goes beyond the sales issue. Americans want to connect not with poetry as a genre but with a single poem. People are looking for something that, without resorting to cliches, translates very powerful human feelings into powerful words.'

But what of Obama and poetry? His gift for language probably has been remarked on with more frequency than his affinity for foreign or domestic policy, so it's no surprise that he opted for an inaugural poet. (Being a Democrat isn't the test; Lyndon Johnson is rumored to have told aides, "Don't bring me any poets," after one arrived at the White House and griped vociferously about the Vietnam War.) But why this one? Kennedy's selection of Frost had the trappings of a preppy love-fest, and Clinton's choices suggested sweeping populism (Angelou) and Southern esoterica (Williams). What does Alexander say about Obama?

Carol Muske-Dukes, the new poet laureate of California, calls Alexander "serious, grounded, immensely gifted" and an "entirely appropriate" poet for the occasion—not least because she reflects a choice that seems personal and carefully considered rather than obvious or expected.

"They're saying this is not about laureates or rock-star poets," Muske-Dukes said. "They're saying this is the kind of poet and poetry we want speaking for us."

But what about the mood and sensibility of the nation? Would it be more "democratic" to feature, say, a rap artist? Or the ultimate symbol of democracy du jour, an "American Idol" winner? Mercifully, it seems not.

And as arcane as the genre has always felt to some, poetry happens to be enjoying a renaissance.

"Back in the 1970s, if you broke 1,000 copies, that was good," said Tree Swenson, executive director of the Academy of American Poets. Not so these days. According to an editorial executive at Penguin, the sales tracker Bookscan (which generally captures only about 70 percent of sales) shows that Billy Collins' "Sailing Alone Around the Room" has sold about 220,000 copies; Robert Haas' "Time and Materials" has sold 13,650 copies; and Mary Oliver's "New and Selected Poems," from 2004, has sold more than 100,000 copies.

But in Swenson's view, poetry's popularity "goes beyond the sales issue. Americans want to connect not with poetry as a genre but with a single poem. People are looking for something that, without resorting to cliches, translates very powerful human feelings into powerful words."

And what might Elizabeth Alexander be thinking about now? Perhaps that inaugural phrase that applies to so many situations: "So help me God."

Daum is an essayist and novelist in Los Angeles.

Letters to the Editor

Sham marriages

Evidently the number of Freely Associated States IR's seeking to improve their status through each respective FAS government (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, Republic of Palau and Marshall Islands) has fallen from over 300 IR's to about 50 or less, a clear indication that many of these individuals had knowingly and falsely obtained their IR status by getting into marriages they knew were fraudulent from the start. Many probably now realize that legitimizing what started out as a lie several years ago would be difficult at this stage so they have stopped trying and are seeking other avenues by which to legitimize their stay for at least two more years.

Meanwhile, the island governments are probably going to be sympathetic to their sons or daughters coming to them pleading for assistance with their foreign spouses, if they come to them with legitimate claims. But those coming to them with fraudulent claims are going to find the going uphill all the way.

Here's how these sham marriages work: the betrothed would meet at the Mayor's Office where a quick ceremony would take place and then they would part ways soon after that and, like the hands on the clock, would meet once every 12. Once every 12 months, that is, at Immigration Office where they would renew the IR permit after a quick exchange of money. And then they would part ways again, only to meet once again after 12 months. Love, of course, was never in the equation of these marriages, thus not even a quickie between husband and wife at any time during the marriage.

Meanwhile, in many cases, the foreign spouse would be living with his/her spouse, working at a job that should rightfully go to a U.S. citizen/resident, and raising children. In short, living a lie and complaining about his/her plight about being here in the Commonwealth, even marching to show how bad life is becoming in the CNMI.

Remember the underaged girl who complained about being trafficked to the CNMI? This underaged girl entered the CNMI with a valid passport issued by her own government stating that she was of legal age. We wonder if someone held a gun to her head as she went from agency to the next in her home country to lie about her age in order to get a passport stating she was of age in order to get here to work in a bar. If someone did hold a gun to her head and that someone was from the CNMI, then we have something to be ashamed of. Wonder we do indeed.

The scenario of sham marriages involving FAS citizens also holds true for many who "married" U.S. and permanent residents. Many foreign workers married U.S. citizens and permanent residents for the sole purpose of prolonging their stay here. This scenario would have worked wonderfully if it were not for federalization. Now in order to stay here legally for more than two years, they would need to file for green cards. Good luck if your so-called marriage has been a sham.

U.S. and permanent resident IR's looking to file for green cards should know that several individuals have already been convicted of falsification and of fraud by the U.S. Government.

So be afraid. Be very afraid.

Silech Terei
Upper Navy Hill, Saipan

Racial purity in church

Finally! Congratulations and a big *si yu'us ma'ase* to one individual who had the courage and strength to stand up for the rights of the *indigenous* people. It is so refreshing to finally hear someone speak up and say what needs to be said, and coming from an official of a Catholic parish only makes it that much better. When are these outsiders going to learn that when it comes to worshiping Christ and celebrating the unity of all mankind that they should do it somewhere else? This is their island, their homeland, their Church, not yours. And for those waiting for an apology, don't hold your breath.

As one indigenous letter writer so eloquently pointed out in a recent response to something Mr. Vergara wrote: "Local people are *not* racist!" And this observation is spot on. It is perfectly understandable to want to learn about the teachings of Jesus in a racially pure setting (except for the outsider priest, of course). Everyone knows that the central tenet of Christianity is the promotion of racial purity. It was the topic of over half of Jesus' sermons.

Here's the one thing that all these outsiders (Americans included) just don't get: The CNMI is not the United States. The CNMI is *self-governing* like a sovereign independent nation that has a partnership arrangement with the United States. That is why only the federal laws and democratic principles that the *indigenous* people of the CNMI happen to agree with are applicable in the CNMI. The Covenant is like a treaty between two equal nations, which is why the CNMI is unique and not really U.S. soil. The CNMI doesn't want your tired, your hungry or your poor, and it certainly does not want your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. All we want from the outsiders who happen to temporarily be here is that they be hard working, keep their mouths shut, not breed, stay out of our churches and go back to wherever it is you came from when we're done with you. And if you do make the mistake of breeding while you are guests of this indigenous, sovereign homeland, take your kids with you. You outsiders shouldn't expect to become a real part of the community, or to ever vote, or to go to the indigenous peoples' churches. You should expect to be a permanent and silent underclass that makes up a majority of the population. This is the status you agreed to when you left your own country so live with it or *go home*!

As has been pointed out on numerous occasions, the Covenant is a sacred document. And everyone knows that sacred means something that is holy, approved and endorsed by God Himself. Since the sacred, God-endorsed Covenant clearly explains how racial superiority works in the Commonwealth, that means God Himself approves of it, and anyone who questions the Commonwealth and its Apartheid system is a blasphemer. It's that simple.

Kudos to you Mr. Cepeda. It would be nice to see more of our leaders standing up and doing the work of God. Our legislators should show the same courage and properly represent the important (i.e., indigenous) people of the Commonwealth. Unless these outsiders learn and accept their proper place in the Commonwealth there will always be strife. I invite all of them (Americans included) to keep their mouths shut in the future, stop writing blasphemous letters to the editor, accept being yelled at and publicly humiliated by your racial superiors and find yourselves some other place to go on Sunday. The thousands of dollars you contribute to the Church will still be welcome, however. Just put the cash in an envelope and slip it under the side door on Wednesday afternoons. If you outsiders follow these simple rules there will be no problems or cause for anyone to be publicly corrected in the future.

Thanks for your compliance.

William Strand
via e-mail

Resolving land claims

I have no more comments for Mr. John Del Rosario, Jr. I hold no personal grudge and I hope he has none against me. I only pray he sees the urgency to help the government resolve pending land claims made by the heirs of Rita Rogolifoi and others.

I would like to commend Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider for introducing House Bill 16-206 and all the House of Representatives that voted for the bill, which will hopefully address the need for assistance by Department of Public Lands in administering the land compensation program.

Enrique K. Seman
Kagman, Saipan.

Celebration for change

Now that race can be overlooked when it comes to electing a US President, more of us can say that we are proud to be American. The world has witnessed history in Obama's victory, a victory for all who still believe in the American Dream. Obama's victory symbolizes the American Dream. He is a minority who served only one term as a senator and will now become the most powerful person in the world. The day of his inauguration comes right after the birthday of the man who made it all possible. Martin Luther King helped pave the way for Obama and other minorities to become U.S. President. The American Dream is why many people want to live in America. America is the place of opportunity for all. Although Americans who are from U.S. territories are not yet allowed to vote for U.S. President, the non-voting delegates have made the right move and decided to introduce legislation that would allow *all* Americans to be able to vote for U.S. President. Hopefully it passes.

Jesse Torres
Kagman

Business

Russia, Ukraine sign gas deal, end standoff

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia and Ukraine pledged to restore natural gas supplies to Europe after signing deals Monday to end a bitter dispute that led to a chilling two-week cutoff of shipments.

Europeans, who normally get about one-fifth of their gas from Russia via Ukrainian pipelines, anxiously awaited for the fuel to start flowing.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Tymoshenko signed the documents at Putin's government headquarters on the Moscow river. They resulted from an outline agreement they had clinched in late-night talks Sunday as heads of Russia's state-run natural gas monopoly Gazprom and the Ukraine's Naftogaz.

"As a result of intensive and lengthy talks we have reached agreement on all issues concerning natural gas supply to Ukraine and its transit to Europe," Putin said. He said Gazprom had been instructed to resume shipments bound for Europe that had been halted since Jan. 7 as Moscow and Kiev argued over 2009 gas prices and allegations that Ukraine was stealing gas destined for Europe.

AP

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, right, and his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Tymoshenko, left, shake hands after signing gas deal in Moscow, Russia, Monday, Jan. 19, 2009, shortly after their talks. Russia and Ukraine on Monday signed a deal that restores natural gas shipments to Ukraine and paves the way for an end to the nearly two-week cutoff of most Russian gas to a freezing Europe.

Tymoshenko said the gas would be pumped toward Europe as soon as it enters the Ukrainian pipes. But neither official said exactly when the gas would begin flowing.

Officials said the restored gas shipments could take up to 36 hours to cross Ukraine, which is the size of France, and reach European customers.

EU officials were taking a wait and see attitude.

"We now need an indication of the precise time that gas deliveries will be resumed. Our monitors will verify when the gas actually starts to flow," the European Commission said.

Europe gets about 20 percent of its total natural gas needs from Russia via Ukrainian pipelines, and the cutoff hit hard at some countries, such as Bulgaria and Slovakia, that rely almost entirely on Russia for gas. In the Balkans and other eastern European nations, the crisis has shut factories and left millions of people to shiver in unheated homes.

The confrontation has deeply shaken Europeans' trust in both Russia and Ukraine as reliable energy suppliers—something each has repeatedly insisted it is, while blaming the other for the supply cutoff.

More than 15 nations have been forced to scramble for alternative sources of energy. The dispute was further complicated by geopolitical struggles over Ukraine's future and over lucrative export routes for the energy riches of the former Soviet Union.

Before dawn Sunday, Tymoshenko and Putin negotiated a preliminary deal for Ukraine to get gas with a 20 percent discount from this year's average European price, which Russia says is $450 per 1,000 cubic meters. That would double the price Ukraine paid in 2008.

Accountant: Fla. money manager owed $50 million

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP)—Around the same time he mysteriously vanished, hedge fund manager Arthur G. Nadel owed a $50 million payout to some of the investors who had entrusted their life savings to him, an accountant said Monday.

Instead, they learned their money was gone—and now they're left asking if it was all a bad investment, or if they were scammed.

The search for Nadel entered its sixth day Monday as more investors contacted authorities with concerns their savings, and Nadel, were gone forever. Nadel's green Subaru was found in a Sarasota airport parking lot on Jan. 15, and he left his family a note in which he appeared to be "very distraught," said Lt. Chuck Lesaltato of the Sarasota County Sheriff's office.

Nadel, 75, was expected to deliver a $50 million redemption that day to investors in the six hedge funds he managed, said Michael Zucker, an internal accountant for Scoop Management Inc., where Nadel traded. Nothing in documents indicated the funds weren't turning a profit, he said.

"Mind you, this was a lot, but it was still, we thought, very easily done," Zucker said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Rescue efforts show difficulty of fixing bank woes

WASHINGTON (AP)—The day before President-elect Barack Obama takes office, the escalating troubles facing major banks around the world couldn't be clearer.

On Monday, the British government swooped in to boost its stake in troubled Royal Bank of Scotland to almost 70 percent and offered to insure banks against large-scale losses on risky assets in exchange for binding agreements to lend out more money.

It was the second major British bank bailout in three months. Shares of ailing RBS, parent of Providence, R.I.-based Citizens Financial Group., lost two-thirds of their value in Monday's trading. Shares of other European banks plunged as investors worried that one or more banks could be nationalized after RBS said last year's losses could reach $41.3 billion—the biggest ever for a British corporation.

Officials on both sides of the Atlantic have failed to contain the most severe credit crisis in decades, which has ravaged banks in places as diverse as Ireland, Iceland and Switzerland, along with the U.S. and Britain.

Now top officials in London, Washington and Brussels are scrambling to figure out how to stop the bleeding. They are trying to find the best way to prod banks into lending out more money, struggling for a solution 18 months after the most severe credit crisis in decades sent investors reeling.

U.S. officials are talking about establishing a new government-backed bank to remove bad loans and other toxic assets from banks' balance sheets, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said last week. In theory, with those assets gone, banks would be freer to make more loans.

Still, figuring out a successful strategy for how to unclog the credit markets is a vexing challenge for Obama when he takes office on Tuesday. Obama's top economic adviser, Larry Summers, said on CBS' "Face the Nation," Sunday that under the new administration, "the focus isn't going to be on the needs of banks. It's going to be on the needs of the economy for credit."

Banking fears grip European markets

LONDON (AP)—European stock markets fell Monday with banks in free fall as investors fretted over a second British government bailout of the sector in three months and some predicted that cash-strapped Royal Bank of Scotland Group PLC would end up fully nationalized.

Europe's early gains were erased as the investors were spooked by fears that the British government's latest move was a step toward full nationalization of one or more banks, and that other governments will have to step in to save their leading banks.

Germany's DAX closed down 50.14 points, or 1.2 percent, at 4,316.14, while France's CAC-40 fell 27.06 points, or 0.9 percent, at 2,989.69.

Most attention was on the FTSE 100 index of leading British shares, which was down 38.59 points, or 0.9 percent, at 4,108.47, even though the British government said it would be creating a progam to insure bank loans in the hope that the banks will start lending again.

Any hopes that the government had that the announcement would ease the stock market pressures on the banks evaporated as they suffered another day of frenzied selling.

Oil falls below $35 ahead of busy earnings week

By PABLO GORONDI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Oil prices fell to below $35 a barrel Monday as investors eyed a slew of U.S. corporate earnings this week for signs of weakening consumer demand amid the worst recession in decades.

Light, sweet crude for February delivery was down $1.88 to $34.63 a barrel by mid-afternoon in Europe in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract, which expires on Tuesday, rose $1.11 on Friday to settle at $36.51. The March contract was trading at $40.90 a barrel, down $1.67.

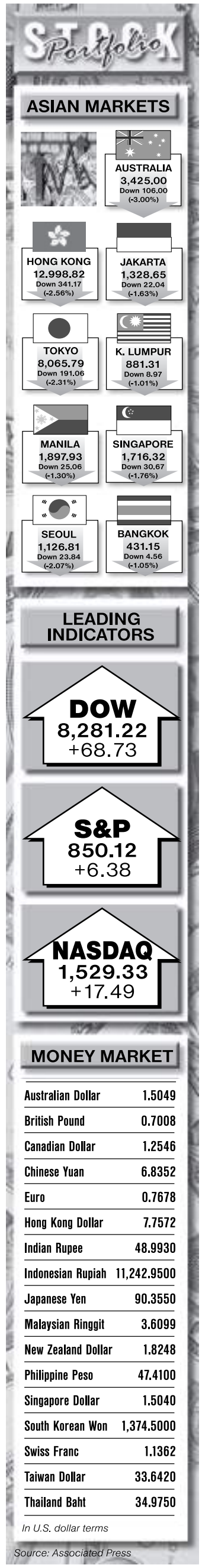
In London, the March Brent crude contract fell $1.87 to $44.70 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange.

The large spread between the Nymex and Brent contracts was attributed in part to the "brimming stock situation" in Cushing, Oklahoma, the delivery point for the Nymex contract, said analysts at JBC Energy in Vienna.

The oil market is closed in the U.S. on Monday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and on Tuesday the attention of some investors will be diverted to Washington with the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama.

Other geopolitical factors also were seen as bearish for prices.

"The easing of the conflict in Israel-Gaza and the promise of a signed resolution (Monday) of the Russian-Ukraine gas supply dispute may weigh on price sentiment already subdued by the weight of lower demand forecasts," said a report from Sucden Financial Research in London.



Nation

Obama steps to door of White House–and history

WASHINGTON (AP)—Barack Obama stood at the threshold of the White House on Monday, summoning fellow Americans to join him in service as tens of thousands flocked to the nation's capital to celebrate his inauguration as the first black president.

"Tomorrow we will come together as one people on the same Mall where Dr. King's dream echoes still," said the president-elect, invoking the memory of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on the national holiday in his honor.

The 47-year-old former senator takes office at noon Tuesday at a time of economic crisis at home and two wars overseas. But the challenges of the moment receded into the background for many who came for a chance to witness history.

"I didn't think I would see a black president in my generation. I just had to be here," said Donald Butler, 20, a University of Washington student.

"I'm just really happy that I'm living to see this wonderful event," said 70-year-old Betty Bryant, who rode a chartered bus from Augusta, Ga. Standing in front of the icy Reflecting Pool facing the Capitol, she made plans to rise at 3 a.m. Tuesday to take her place on the Mall for the swearing-in.

Obama's own schedule showed he had one eye on the bipartisan support he'll need after taking office. The night before becoming the nation's 44th president he was stopping by dinners saluting his vice president, Joe Biden, and two Republican stalwarts: former Secretary of State Colin Powell and Sen. John McCain of Arizona, the man Obama defeated last November to win the White House.

Uniformed military personnel patrolled Washington street corners, the advance guard of a massive security presence planned for the oath-taking, inaugural speech, parade and other festivities. Officers checked out some suspicious packages and vehicles, but everything was cleared, said FBI spokesman Richard Kolko. "The city and the people seem to be in a good mood and good spirits," he said. "Security is going well, that's what all the planning is for."

AP

Carol Williams from Brooklyn, N.Y., holds an American flag on the National Mall in Washington Monday, Jan. 19, 2009, in anticipation of the swearing-in of President-elect Barack Obama Tuesday.

Bush commutes sentences of former US border agents

WASHINGTON (AP)—In his final acts of clemency, President George W. Bush on Monday granted early prison releases to two former U.S. Border Patrol agents whose convictions for shooting a Mexican drug dealer fueled the national debate over illegal immigration.

Bush, responding to heavy pressure from Republican and Democratic lawmakers alike, commuted the prison sentences of Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean. The two guards from El Paso, Texas, each were sentenced to more than 10 years for the shooting, which they tried to cover up. They will be released within two months.

Opposition to their convictions, sentencing and firings has simmered ever since the shooting occurred in 2005.

"After four years of fighting this, it's taken a toll on me and my daughter, and really the whole family," said Joe Loya, Ramos' father-in law, who has received tens of thousands of supportive e-mails and spent much of the past two years traveling the country to speak about the case. "We wouldn't give up. ... I knew sooner or later God would come through—that finally it would happen."

He said his daughter, Monica Ramos, called from New York after learning the news that her husband soon would be released from a federal prison just outside Phoenix.

"She could hardly speak," Loya said.

The border agents' case became a rallying cause for conservatives concerned about border protection. On talk shows, people sympathetic with the agents argued that the men were just doing their jobs, defending the U.S.-Mexico border against criminals.

Bob Baskett, Compean's attorney in Dallas, cited widespread congressional support from the bipartisan congressional delegation from Texas. "I think the president did the right thing," he said. "An awful lot of people did an awful lot of work to get this done."

Hundreds gather for King Day service in Atlanta

ATLANTA (AP)—The inauguration of the nation's first black president is a huge step toward realizing Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of racial equality, but there is still work to be done, King's nephew told a large crowd Monday at the church where the civil rights leader once preached.

Isaac Newton Farris, president of The King Center, told the jubilant crowd on Martin Luther King Jr. Day that the election of Barack Obama was built on a foundation laid by King.

"There is definitely a spiritual connection between these two events," Farris told the mostly black congregation that erupted in applause at any mention of Obama's name.

Though Obama's election to the nation's highest office is a milestone, King's final achievement will not be complete until disparities in health care, education and economics are eliminated, he said.

"The dream was not about an individual or any race of people attaining power," Farris said. "It was a human dream."

The sanctuary of Ebenezer Baptist Church was packed with about 2,000 people, and dozens were left outside.

The celebration also included a keynote address from Pastor Rick Warren, a Southern Baptist who is scheduled to give the invocation at Obama's inauguration on Tuesday. Warren urged the crowd to follow King's example of service and selflessness.

AP

A man holds his arms up during the Martin Luther King Jr., Annual Commemorative Service at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta Monday, Jan. 19, 2009.

Records show plane suffered previous engine malfunction

WASHINGTON (AP)—The US Airways jetliner that crashed into New York's Hudson River last week experienced an engine compressor failure two days earlier, federal safety investigators said Monday.

National Transportation Safety Board spokesman Peter Knudson said the board's examination of the Airbus 320's maintenance records show "there was an entry in the aircraft's maintenance log that indicates a compressor stall occurred on Jan. 13." The compressor, or fan, draws air into the engine.

He said the flight had a different pilot that day, and the board planned to interview that pilot to learn more about the incident.

NTSB investigators so far have not uncovered "any anomalies or malfunctions with Flight 1549 from the time it left the gate at LaGuardia Airport on Jan. 15 to the point the pilot reported a birdstrike and loss of engine power," Knudson said. Pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger was able to glide to plane to an emergency river landing and there were no fatalities.

CNN reported Monday that passengers on the Flight 1549 that left LaGuardia Airport on Jan. 13 reported hearing loud bangs followed by an announcement from the pilot that the aircraft was either returning to LaGuardia or going to try to land—there were differing accounts of the pilot's statements.

However, passengers said that a short time later the situation appeared to return to normal and the flight continued on to Charlotte, N.C., CNN said.

It's not unusual for a flight to continue on to its destination after a compressor stall if the engine returns to normal functioning.

ACROSS THE NATION

Icy depiction of Gore unveiled by critic in Alaska

FAIRBANKS, Alaska (AP)—A critic of global warming is responsible for the icy glare Al Gore is giving this Alaskan community. Local businessman Craig Compeau on Monday unveiled an ice sculpture of the 2007 Nobel Prize winner and leader in the movement to draw attention to climate change and global warming. The 8 1/2-foot-tall, 5-ton bust of the former vice president dominates a downtown street corner from its perch on the back of a flatbed truck. Compeau says he's a "moderate" critic of global warming theories. He used the unveiling of the sculpture to invite Gore to Fairbanks to explain his global warming theories. He says it will stand through March unless it melts before then. It was 22 degrees on Monday. Gore could not immediately be reached for comment Monday night.

Texas girl gets new heart; sis awaiting transplant

DALLAS (AP)—A 7-year-old girl received a new heart Monday, more than eight months after she and her older sister were put on the transplant list because of the same rare ailment. Their mother said Shayde Smith is relieved now that her sister Emily has received a transplant. "She's still nervous about it, but she said that now that Emily's made it through, she knows she will," Natalie Van Noy said. The girls have restrictive cardiomyopathy, which means the heart doesn't relax between pumps and doesn't fill properly with blood. The condition can cause blood clots or death. Emily was a higher priority for transplant than 9-year-old Shayde because she had more symptoms, including wheezing spells and her lips, toes and fingertips turning blue when she got cold. Van Noy said Emily's hands and feet are now warm. "She looks awesome," her mother said.

2 dead in snowy, 40-vehicle highway crash in Md.

MYERSVILLE, Md. (AP)—A pileup of 35 cars and five tractor-trailers on a snowy Maryland highway killed two people Monday and seriously injured at least a dozen, state police said. Snow was at least partly to blame for the 12:30 p.m. crash on Interstate 70 near South Mountain in northwestern Maryland, said State Police spokeswoman Elena Russo. An inch-and-a-half of snow quickly fell around the same time as the pileup. Twelve seriously injured people were taken to Washington County Hospital, Russo said. Jessica Granek, 21, of Columbia, was driving west with three friends to go skiing at Whitetail as visibility was getting worse from the snow, which left a slushy mess on the ground. "We started to see brake lights, and I saw a blue SUV turn hard and become perpendicular to the road," Granek said. "That made everyone put their brakes on and (they) started sliding. We were fortunate to veer off the right side of road."

Asia

Worldwide, well-wishers mobilize for inauguration

OBAMA, Japan (AP)—Hula dancers readied for the stage in a small city on Japan's coast that by coincidence bears his name. Children from his old school in Indonesia were to sing for a gathering well-wishers. And in Hong Kong, Americans prepared to party into the night, while a wax museum put up his likeness to mark the day. Across Asia, and the world, people mobilized with hope and joy to mark the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama.

In one of the kick-off events, the Japanese town of Obama put up stages outside a local Buddhist temple for an "Obama for Obama" event, featuring the hula dancers—Obama was born in Hawaii, and hula is popular in Japan—and speeches by local dignitaries.

The town has been big on Obama all the way from the primaries. After his election, more than 1,000 people turned out for a raucus celebration. Obama, which means "little beach," has a population of 32,000.

The town's businesses have pumped out Barack Obama sweet bean cakes, chopsticks, T-shirts, fish burgers, neck ties, and Obama Noodles marked "For world peace and stability." Most items show only the back of his head, to avoid any legal complications.

Masami Shirai, a 59-year-old restaurant owner, said he is delighted that Obama is finally taking office.

"I'm so delighted, and we're already celebrating his inauguration here," he said. "We are all hoping that President Obama will visit the Obama City. We already set up a co-educational hula dancing team so we can welcome him if he visits."

In Indonesia, where Obama spent four years as a boy, children from his old school will sing at celebrations in downtown Jakarta and former classmates of the president-elect will gather to watch his speech.

Vendors in the world's most populous Muslim nation geared up for the event, selling Obama T-shirts and a variation of a popular fried rice dish, called Nasi Goreng Obama.

Hopes are high that Obama will return in the first 100 days of his presidency to the tropical country where he is known by the nickname Barry.

Hong Kong was also marking the historic transition.

The Madame Tussauds museum at Hong Kong's popular mountaintop tourist attraction Victoria Peak was due to unveil a wax figure of Obama, adding to its collection of statues of Chinese celebrities like Jackie Chan, former Chinese leaders Mao Zedong and Jiang Zemin and the country's first astronaut, Yang Liwei.

213 China families take milk case to highest court

BEIJING (AP)—More than 200 families whose babies fell ill after drinking tainted infant formula said Monday they are taking their case to China's highest court after being repeatedly ignored by lower courts.

The lawsuit involving 213 families poses a challenge to the government's attempts to end one of the country's worst food safety crises. The scandal over milk spiked with an industrial chemical has been blamed for the deaths of six babies and the sickening of nearly 300,000 others with kidney stones and kidney failure.

The 22 Chinese dairies involved have proposed a 1.1 billion yuan ($160 million) compensation plan to be divided among the hundreds of thousands of affected families, but many parents want higher compensation and long-term treatment for their babies.

"The reason why I'm bringing this case to court is not about money but about my child's future," said Zhang Ge, a single mother in Beijing who quit her job at an Internet advertising company to look after her sick son.

Beijing attorney Xu Zhiyong said lawyers for the families mailed an application Friday to the Supreme People's Court in Beijing to sue the dairies.

But it seemed unlikely the court would hear the lawsuit, given that lower courts have so far refused to hear at least a dozen lawsuits in the politically sensitive scandal.

The lawyers' group has not been notified if the application has been received. Phone calls to the inquiry office of the Supreme People's Court rang unanswered Monday.

The government and the dairy companies had hoped the nationwide payout scheme would ease public anger. Instead, it has given embittered, outspoken parents across the country a common cause.

Xu said the lawsuit seeks 36 million yuan ($5.3 million) in total compensation to be divided among the 213 families.

The dairies' compensation plan would pay 200,000 yuan ($29,000) to each family whose baby died, and 30,000 yuan ($4,380) to each family with a child having a serious case of kidney stones.

But the lawsuit seeks 314,000 yuan ($46,000) for each family whose baby died or was seriously sickened.

ASIAN BRIEFS

16-year-old Chinese boy dies of bird flu

BEIJING (AP)—A 16-year-old boy infected with the H5N1 bird flu virus has died in central China, the country's third fatality from the disease this month. The official Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday that the student, who surname was Wu, died in Hunan province. It did not give any other details. In a report Monday, Xinhua said Wu fell ill on Jan. 8 in his hometown in the southwestern province of Guizhou and was transferred to a hospital in Hunan on Jan. 16, when his condition worsened. He had had contact with poultry, the report said without giving other details. Two other people sickened with the virus have died this month. One was a 27-year-old woman in Shandong province in the country's east and the other was a 19-year-old woman who died in Beijing on Jan. 5.

US: 22 militants killed in Afghan clashes

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan says 22 militants have been killed and 11 others detained during a series of clashes throughout the country. The coalition statement says its troops were forced to use hand grenades in one of the clashes in the southern province of Kandahar on Monday. In the east, troops used airstrikes in their clash with militants in Kapisa province, killing 19 militants. Violence has been rising across Afghanistan over the last two years, and the United States is rushing thousands of new troops to counter a resurgence in Taliban-led violence following the initial defeat of the militant group in the U.S. invasion in 2001.

Australian convicted of insulting Thai monarchy

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—A few lines in a novel that sold just seven copies have earned an Australian writer three years in a Thai prison. The conviction of Harry Nicolaides on Monday for insulting the monarchy is one of a recent flurry of such cases, underlining Thailand's sensitivity about how to safeguard the royal institution when 81-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej—the world's longest-serving head of state—passes from the scene. Nicolaides, 41, was sentenced for insulting the king and Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn in his self-published 2005 book "Verisimilitude," which he has said sold seven copies. Shackled at the ankles and handcuffed, Nicolaides said he felt "dreadful" as guards escorted him out of the courtroom. "I would like to apologize," he said, adding that he had "unqualified respect for the king of Thailand" and had not intended to insult him. He said he endured "unspeakable suffering" during his pretrial detention, but did not elaborate.

World

AP

Palestinians search in rubble as they collect belongings from a destroyed house after the Israeli army operation in Jebaliya, northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Jan. 19, 2009.

Hamas fighters seek to restore order in Gaza Strip

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Uniformed Hamas security teams emerged on Gaza City's streets Monday as leaders of the Islamic militant group vowed to restore order in the shattered Palestinian territory after a three-week pummeling by the Israeli military. Hamas proclaimed it won a great victory over the Jewish state—a view that appeared greatly exaggerated—and the task of reconstruction faced deep uncertainty because of the fear of renewed fighting and Israel's control over border crossings.

Cars and pedestrians again clogged streets. Donkey carts hauled produce and firewood past rubble and broken glass. The parliament building and other targets of Israeli attacks were piles of debris, while orange and olive groves on the edge of town were flattened.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon planned to travel to Gaza on Tuesday to inspect damage and visit U.N. facilities hit in the fighting. Ban did not scheduled meetings with officials from Hamas, whose government is not internationally recognized.

Israelis hope Gaza's civilians, who suffered heavily in the fighting that ended Sunday, will blame their militant rulers for provoking the Israeli assault with rocket attacks on southern Israel. Hamas, however, raced to capitalize on anger toward Israel and sought to show it remains unbowed and firmly in command of the Mediterranean coastal strip.

"We are still ready and capable of firing more rockets. We are developing the range of our rockets and the enemy will face more, and our rockets will hit new targets, God willing," said Abu Obeida, the spokesman for Hamas' military wing.

Despite the defiance, Gaza's Iran-backed leadership is likely to focus for now on assisting a traumatized population rather than re-igniting a full-blown conflict that could bring more misery to the area's 1.4 million people.

The high visibility of uniformed Hamas police stood in contrast to the furtive movements of Hamas fighters in civilian clothing who confronted or tried to evade the Israeli onslaught that began Dec. 27.

UN: Hundreds of millions needed for Gaza aid

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid will be needed immediately to help Gaza's 1.4 million people and billions of dollars will be required to rebuild its shattered buildings and infrastructure, the U.N. humanitarian chief said Monday.

John Holmes said some neighborhoods have been almost totally destroyed, there are huge medical and food needs, sewage is flowing in some streets, and unexploded ordnance is posing a big problem.

While 100,000 people had their running water restored on Sunday, 400,000 still have no water, electricity is available for less than half the day, and 100,000 people are displaced from their homes, Holmes said.

WORLD BRIEFS

9/11 suspects declare guilt at Gitmo war court

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba (AP)—Two alleged orchestrators of the 2001 attacks on America casually declared their guilt on Monday in a messy and perhaps final session of the Guantanamo war crimes court. This week's military hearings could be the last at Guantanamo—President-elect Barack Obama has said he would close the offshore prison and many expect him to suspend the military tribunals and order new trials in the U.S. Ramzi Binalshibh and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-proclaimed architect of the terrorist attacks, were unapologetic about their roles during a series of outbursts as translators struggled to keep up and the judge repeatedly sought to regain control. "We did what we did; we're proud of Sept. 11," announced Binalshibh, who has said he wants to plead guilty to charges that could put him to death. The judge must first determine if he is mentally competent to stand trial. Mohammed shrugged off the potential death sentence for the murder of nearly 3,000 people in the Sept. 11 attacks. "We don't care about capital punishment," said Mohammed, whose thick gray beard flows to the top of his white prison jumpsuit. "We are doing jihad for the cause of God."

Human rights lawyer, journalist killed in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP)—A Russian human rights lawyer renowned for his work on abuses in Chechnya was shot to death Monday by a masked gunman who followed him from a news conference, officials said. A young journalist who tried to intervene also was gunned down. The broad-daylight shootings of lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova prompted grief and outrage in a country where lawyers and journalists who challenge the official version of justice are frequently targeted. Markelov had fought the early release of a Russian colonel whose killing of a Chechen woman in 2000 put names and faces on the gruesome rights abuses in the war-wracked region. His death Monday angered many Chechens, already upset by the release of last week of the military officer. Colleagues drew comparisons with the 2006 killing of investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya—a client of Markelov's and a fellow enemy of rights abuses in Chechnya and across former President Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Campus Life

Freshmen, want a good roomie?

By KATHLEEN MEGAN
(C) 2008, THE HARTFORD COURANT

In order to get a kind, compassionate, supportive roommate who is a also a friend, be one.

How do you get a kind, compassionate, supportive roommate who is a also a friend? The answer is simple: Be one.

That's according to University of Michigan researchers who studied more than 300 college freshmen assigned two share rooms with other students they didn't know.

"Roommate relationships can be really good or they can be really bad. And the fear is that they'll go from bad to worse," says Jennifer Crocker, one of the social psychologists who conducted the university's study. "But our study shows that you can create a supportive relationship and turn the stranger who's your roommate into a friend."

One of Crocker's colleagues, Amy Canevello, says that college freshmen often wait to become friends with roommates before interacting in a caring, compassionate manner. If you have a goal from the beginning to be caring and supportive, Canevello says, "the friendship will come and you become that much closer and develop a really strong friendship." Here are some guidelines:

Don't just be polite or tolerant of your roommate; practice caring about them, responding compassionately and supportively.

You can't fake this. The researchers say that roommates were very aware if the other was acting "nice" or "supportive," but wasn't sincere. Roommates easily spot the motives of someone who asks how his partner's day went mainly because he wants to talk about his own day, Canevello says.

After years of impressing teachers and coaches with their intelligence and skills, some kids come to college thinking that's the way to make friends. Canevello says trying to impress a roommate creates distance. A far better goal for a relationship is to be supportive.

Have the difficult conversations with your roommate early and with sensitivity, says Canevello. If your night owl roommate is keeping you up too late, or she's messy when you're neat, don't see it as "her problem." See it as "our problem." Get away from the "ego-system" approach—in which each person focuses on their own needs and tries to shore up their own self-image—and instead move toward an "eco-system" approach, in which roommates are motivated by genuine caring for each other.

CAMPUS PROFILE

'I still feel connected to students'

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Gregorio T. Camacho School, the smallest elementary school on Saipan, has one of the best student-to-teacher ratios and scores on standardized tests. Acting principal Charlotte Camacho said these are a few reasons she's proud to lead the students, teachers and staff of GTC. Here she answers some questions.

Question: What is your background?

Answer: I was a teacher for 9.5 years before becoming a principal. Early childhood education is my background. I taught for 9.5 years in kindergarten and 1st grade. I became acting principal the second semester of the 05-06 school year.

Q: What do you do on a daily basis as acting principal?

A: Aside from all the paper work we have to do, writing reports about the students' progress, all the IEPs [individualized education plans], ordering, using the funding that we have so that our schools have sufficient supplies they need, we also substitute. We are substitute teachers. At our school we have decided that reading is our priority, so the principal and vice principal teach reading for an hour a day.

Q: What's the best thing about being an acting principal?

A: I think it's when you come into contact with the students. I think we still feel connected to the students.

Q: What's the hardest thing about being an acting principal?

A: Not only do you have to take care of needs of schools, but the needs of the central office. It's a balancing act. I find it quite hard to do sometimes. But the students come first, sometimes I find I have to put the paperwork on hold because the students are the priority.

Q: What are your goals for the rest of the year?

A: We wrote a grant. Unfortunately the governor has the final say and he has not quite given us a green light. The grant was to renovate our termite infested classrooms. There are a total of 14 classrooms. Our goal is to make that one way or another, if they are going to re-route that money then we will get that money from someplace else, because we really are in dire need of renovating those classrooms for health reasons. Our goal continues to be that our students are progressing and moving forward with all the scores, in addition to meeting the goals of PSS. Just making sure the kids are growing.

Q: Do you find your principal duties ever enter into your personal life?

A: Yeah, it seeps into your personal life. It's a balancing act. It's something I find very hard to do, however; I have young children and they have expressed the need for me to be with them, 'Mommy we need you to stop, we need you to come home.'

The school does become your family; however, it should be your second family, as I'm learning. That's my resolution [and] I'm working on that.

NEW GRADUATES
Kimberlyn Sugue Torres, daughter of Mariano C. Torres and Dory Rice of Boise, Idaho, graduated with a bachelor's degree in Health Informatics and Information Management from the Boise State University this December 2008.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Michelle Ross Kintol Tenorio, daughter of Juan and Becky K. Tenorio (Santiago) of Saipan, CNMI, recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from the Boise State University this December 2008.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By MARGARET SPELLINGS
Special to The Washington Post

The writer is secretary of education.

A word to my successor

Dear Arne Duncan,

Congratulations! I am so pleased that President-elect Barack Obama has asked you, a fellow reformer, to serve as the next U.S. secretary of education. Your experience as chief executive officer of Chicago Public Schools will be invaluable in continuing the work we in the Bush administration began doing to close the achievement gap and provide all children, regardless of race, income level or background, the skills needed to succeed.

This is an important and hopeful change from the past. For decades, our nation took what I call the "ostrich approach" to improving schools: Instead of facing challenges, we buried our heads in the sand. Thanks to the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act, we now measure student achievement annually so that we can take an honest look at our problems—the first step toward solving them.

Is it working? Yes. Test scores in reading and math have reached record highs. And the children once left behind—African American, Hispanic, those living in urban areas—are driving these academic gains.

Still, the strong reactions the law provokes speak to the harsh truths it reveals. I understand that this sometimes causes anxiety and discomfort. As Gen. Colin Powell has noted, when 1 million students drop out every year, "it's more than a problem, it's a catastrophe."

Many people believe that No Child Left Behind can be improved. I agree. In fact, constant improvement is the very point of the law. We have worked closely with states and school districts to implement it fairly and tailor it for their needs.

But I urge you to resist calls to dismantle the core accountability provisions that give the law its power to identify and help children in need. Without it, we're back to doling out dollars and crossing our fingers.

You will need allies in this fight. And you will find them in the unique and growing nationwide coalition of reformers. These civil rights, business and community leaders understand that recovery on Wall Street and Main Street depends on reform in the classroom. They recognize, as do you and President-elect Obama, that when we raise expectations, we achieve results.

You need no lessons from me on toughness and tenacity. Not only did you achieve results for Chicago's schoolchildren, but you did it in the face of steady criticism. You stuck to your guns on merit pay for teachers who showed results. You expanded charter schools when others wanted to limit them. And you closed chronically underperforming schools so that they could be restructured.

I am confident you will bring this attitude to Washington. In 2006, you asked Congress to increase funding for No Child Left Behind, calling it "the best long-term investment Congress can make." You have said that "the ideas behind (the law) make a lot of sense." One of those ideas is that every student be taught to grade level in reading and math. Most parents would agree that that is not too much to ask.

I urge you to build on the progress we've made in higher education. We have worked with colleges and universities to improve accountability, affordability and access. This is critical for students who rely on federal student loans, which we have protected during the financial crisis. About 1.2 million more students are receiving Pell Grants than in 2001, and the maximum award has risen by nearly $1,000—a further safety net for uncertain times.

Finally, I would ask you to not let Congress take away Opportunity Scholarships for the District of Columbia. They are lifelines for at-risk children, enabling their parents to choose public, private or religious schools that meet their needs. Fortunately, those children have a true champion in Chancellor Michelle Rhee, who is doing a great job turning around D.C. schools.

Many in Washington will judge you on your popularity with adults. If some adults are made uncomfortable by your policies, so be it. The needs of children must come first.

Life & Style

Lessons from being first

(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

Before Barack Obama, there were Howard N. Lee, Blenda Wilson and Maurice Ashley.

Lee became the first black mayor in modern times of a predominantly white Southern town. Wilson was the first black president of California State University, Northridge, Ashley the first black to attain the rank of grandmaster in chess.

With Obama becoming the nation's 44th president, Lee, Wilson, Ashley and other pioneering blacks were asked to reflect on the challenges and lessons of being a"first."

For some, race played a large role in their careers; for others it was incidental. Many said they felt a sense of obligation to the larger black community to succeed. Their remarks, based on interviews with Times reporters, have been condensed for brevity.

HOWARD N. LEE

Chapel Hill, N.C. mayor

In 1969, Lee made international headlines when he defeated a white opponent and was elected mayor of Chapel Hill, a college town of 12,500 with a population that was 10 percent black at the time.

Lee, who as a child was beaten by Klansmen, wasn't prepared for the attention his election generated. Now 74, he recalls that some black activists accused him of being too accommodating of white interests—an Uncle Tom.

"I wasn't intending to send a message. I was simply trying to influence decision-making in Chapel Hill.

"It was strange. I began to get all these accolades from around the country. People were asking: 'How in the world did you do that? And how about coming to consult with us and telling us how we can do it?'...I was mayor of Chapel Hill, but I was treated like I was the mayor of every other town by black folk. …

"People in the power structure, particularly in the state Legislature, now perceived me as a threat—a stalking horse for the radical element, which would feel they now had permission to just run all over the place.

"I thought that every right-thinking black person would see this as an opportunity to not have to continue to fight from outside the system, but gain some hope for coming inside the system. But there was this throwback to slavery days, and they were making the comparison between the house slaves and the field slaves, and I became the house slave. That was tough.

"The night of the election, there were (white) people in Chapel Hill who were absolutely devastated. I made a point, as Barack has done, to go to the people who didn't have confidence in me and reach out to them. That paid off for me by my final campaign, when I won with over 85 percent of the vote.

"Some (white residents) would not talk to me at all. They never came around and I had to write them off. But many people did. It's amazing. I play golf with a (white) fellow now who refused to vote for me back then, and we're very close friends."

BLENDA WILSON

University president

By the time she became CSUN's first black and first female president in 1992, Wilson had already blazed a path in academia. In 1988, she'd become the first woman to head a University of Michigan campus, at Dearborn. At CSUN, she earned high praise for her leadership after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Now 67, she is retired and lives with her husband in Savannah, Ga.

"I remember at Michigan someone saying how wonderful it was that African Americans and women could see me as a role model. And a colleague said (that) what's more important is for white young men and women to see an African American in these positions and be successful. It changes the way that everyone looks at opportunity.

"But how can being 'first' be more important than being good?

"Being 'first' opens a conversation about our culture, our history, and in that sense it's not an annoying question. If it never got to accomplishment or vision, though, I suppose I would be annoyed by it. You saw so much in the Obama campaign—the bedrock goodness of this country and our people. You assume there is going to be a second and a third and fifth and tenth, this is just the beginning.

"My father worked in a cleaning establishment, he was a presser—blue-collar hard work. My mother did a variety of white-collar jobs—elevator operator, she worked at Sears, she ended up being a supervisor in a juvenile facility. She was a very smart woman who didn't have the benefit of college.

"My mother never said, 'Somebody's going to be a teacher or go to college.' She always said, 'Blenda's going to be a professional.' Not white collar or blue collar. Not menial, a professional—that was the dream.

"I was thinking about Barack Obama's grandmother having lived to vote for him. In those circumstances where I knew I was a pioneer or a trailblazer, what always seemed to be prominent in my mind was my ancestors who couldn't have dreamed that their granddaughter or great-granddaughter would be in that kind of position.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Blenda Wilson, president of California State University, Northridge, in Los Angeles, was praised for her leadership.

"If there is anything you carry with you, it's the sense that we stand on the shoulders of giants, but we made it to places that our ancestors could not have, and that's a very rewarding feeling.

"In retrospect, what I learned about people from the Northridge earthquake—and I see it in the way Barack Obama casts his vision—leadership is about giving people a way of thinking about the future. I don't want to be corny—that leadership is about hope and the audacity of hope—but it truly is."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

James T. Reynolds, superintendent of Death Valley National Park, grew up in East Texas and remembers young black men turning up dead. "My mother taught us how to survive and when to fight."

JAMES T. REYNOLDS

Superintendent of Death Valley National Monument

Reynolds, 62, forged a career in the National Park Service, most recently serving as the first black superintendent of Death Valley National Monument. Reynolds, who retires this month after four decades, grew up in east Texas.

"We learned at a very early age what it meant to be black in the South. We would often hear about boys or young men disappearing, and being discovered later killed, sometimes by hanging. My mother, who passed away a few years ago at the age of 96, taught us how to survive and when to fight. To this day, whenever I'm facing a difficult situation, or about to do something stupid, I hear her words in my mind.

"For example, over the years I've run into a park visitor here and there who needed my help, but once we were introduced, didn't want to be near me. Well, my mother used to say, 'Son, never let someone else make you happy or sad.' So, instead of saying, 'Hey, man, I'm human too. I'm not going to eat you, or snatch your purse,' I tend to have a lot of fun with that kind of nonsense.

"I recall an older lady in Yosemite Valley who was having some serious medical problems. I went out to take her and her daughter to the clinic. The only place for them to sit was in the front seat with me. These weren't small people, so that front seat was pretty full and I could tell that little old lady didn't want to sit next to me. So I scooted over a little closer to her. At one point, I was driving with one hand on the steering wheel and the other arm draped around her shoulder, all the while asking questions for my report.

"Even today, when I am introduced at a chamber of commerce gathering or a county board of supervisors meeting, there's always some people in the audience who pause and make that facial expression that says, 'Oh my. So you're the superintendent of Death Valley.'

"Regardless, I have a job to do. My mother liked to say, 'Son, did Uncle Sam get his money's worth out of you today?'"When we're recruiting candidates for various positions, I'll ask, 'Are there any folks of color out there we should be looking at?' That question has triggered some uncomfortable dialogue. I've had staffers say things like, 'Well, yes, but I'm not sure a black or Chicano will like working here because it's too hot'—or too cold or some such thing.

"This is an area where the whole National Park Service is remiss. It has never done an adequate job of marketing when it comes to people of color. We should pounce on that demographic. It's ripe, and it's important. We're making progress, but my goodness sakes, it's frustratingly slow."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Maurice Ashley, a chess grand master, with son Jayden, 6, says achieving the rank became a mission.

MAURICE ASHLEY

Grandmaster of chess

Ashley, 42, became in 1999 the first black grandmaster—the highest international title in the chess world. Born in Jamaica, he was initially surprised by the racial divisions he encountered when his family moved to Brooklyn when he was 12.

"Initially, I had not thought about becoming the first black grandmaster in chess history. I had not seen a lot of black faces, but it didn't really concern me so much. It wasn't until I got closer and closer to the title, as I got a bit older, that I really became a bit more preoccupied by the idea. Not really because of myself, but because of fellow black chess players who knew that I had a shot at doing it.

"They'd say, 'Moe, when are you going to do it, man? C'mon, you've got to do it for us.' Of course, I wanted to do it for myself, but having this extra pressure was just almost a little too much, you know? Because you're disappointing a whole race, it felt like, if you don't do it.

"There were other black players who were pretty good, but still hadn't attained that international title....We all felt some sort of, I don't know, I guess, inadequacy in us. Why hadn't we become grandmasters?

"We were great basketball players and entertainers and, obviously, great athletes, and the like. But we hadn't done this, and we sort of saw it as our mission to accomplish that goal. Once I became the likely candidate, then it was all on my shoulders to pull it off. There was a nagging feeling that, by not having a grandmaster of chess, it might have said something about the intellectual capabilities of African Americans.

"I was here at home when Barack Obama became president, and it was one of those moments when you hold your breath until the last moment. You know as a chess player that the game is not over until it's absolutely over, so you try not to hope too much because you're getting ahead of yourself.

"The moment of the announcement was this tremendous relief and release, very similar to the moment when I became a grandmaster myself. It was finally done and now you can move forward, now you can move on."

KAREN BENNETT-HARON

Nevada jurist

Bennett-Haron, 47, became the first black female jurist in Nevada's court system in 2002. She grew up in Las Vegas and worked as a federal public defender and for the Las Vegas Housing Authority.

"Las Vegas in particular has always had that reputation of being the Mississippi of the West. There are some who are going to tell you that it no longer has that reputation. I'm not so certain about that. You're reminded regularly there's a double standard. There's no question about it.

"How did it impact me? I think it probably made me better, quite frankly, especially as a young lawyer. There was concern expressed by members of the county commission after my appointment that the selection process needed to be revamped. (I was) being scrutinized at a level that I don't think other people have been.

"I'm not real big on 'firsts.' I think it's sad: '2002, first black female in the state judiciary.' That's a sad commentary.

"I'd like to see less focus on the first and more focus on more diversity. Sometimes I think people tend to see one person of color in a position and say, 'OK, job done, we've got diversity achieved.'"

SYLVIA ROUSSEAU

Santa Monica, Calif., High School principal

In 1993, Rousseau became the first black and first female principal of Santa Monica High School, where she reduced the drop-out rate, helped raise test scores and increased the college entrance rate for blacks and Hispanics. She is now a professor in the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education.

"I come from a family of firsts. At the University of Cincinnati, an uncle was the first African American to graduate from the School of Pharmacy, and an aunt was the first African American to head a local branch of the library. It's like that African proverb: We stand on the shoulders of our ancestors.

"I think Obama has an edge that many of us don't have. He has not inherited the slave experience. Those of us whose ancestors were part of the whole slave institution, we have built a resilience. But we also carry a baggage. It's as if he didn't get the memo: that I am inferior, as some people portray African Americans.

"Our struggle has been external and internal. It's impossible to come through some of the experiences our people have had without having an effect on who we see ourselves to be.

"I was reared in a home where my father would say to us, 'You are one of the more fortunate ones.' And when I went to college, he said, 'I am not sending you off to become an educated fool. Your role is to serve those who are not as fortunate as you.' I was always conscious that my being in a certain position is an opportunity to make it easier and to give access to those who don't have it.

"I felt in many instances, even by well-meaning people, that I was being tested: Is she really as smart as she might appear to be? There was always a sense in which I felt I was having to prove something about myself."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

"I felt in many instances I was being tested," says Sylvia Rousseau, a principal at Santa Monica High School in Santa Monica, Calif.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Phyllis Currie, general manager of Pasadena Water and Power, says, "Racism? It's always taken a back seat."

PHYLLIS CURRIE

General manager, Pasadena, Calif., Water and Power

In 30 years with the city of Los Angeles, Currie held various jobs, including chief financial officer for the Department of Water and Power. Currie, 61, is now general manager of the Pasadena Water and Power Department, the first black woman to run the agency.

"Looking back, I've come to think that perseverance can be more valuable than sheer brilliance. People who don't give up learn to lead, and succeed, in small steps. One after another.

"When I was growing up in South Central Los Angeles, the mantra repeated by my parents, grandmother and church members was this: 'Get educated and be prepared.'

"Today, it's a message I convey to staffers when we go before the City Council with a proposal that gets shot down, and to Girl Scouts launching a new project, and everyone else.

"Racism? It's always taken a back seat. Oh sure, there were racist attitudes manifested by some teachers who had low expectations of black students.

"But I graduated from Manual Arts High School where I was privileged to have had Mr. Gann as an English teacher. I don't know where he is today, but he will always be my hero.

"On the first day of class, he said, 'Students, when you finish this course, you will be able to pass the English placement exam for freshmen at UCLA, and you will not take dumbbell English.'

"It worked! I did that. And I earned a master's degree in business administration at UCLA. There weren't many black students there at the time.

"I went on to become the first African American in many different positions. I still get phone calls or e-mails from people congratulating me for being the African American this or that.

"'We're proud of you,'" they say. But I don't think too much about that. Being first is not as important as just doing a good job."

Joint Death Anniversary

Joaquina Pangelinan Reyes
5th year

Charles Pangelinan Reyes
2nd year

Dr. Juan Charforous Reyes
5th year

We, the family of the late Joaquina, Charles Sr., and Juan Reyes, would like to invite our relatives and friends as we reminisce our beloved on their death anniversaries beginning on Sunday, January 18, 2009.

Daily Mass is being offered at San Jose Church at 6:00 a.m. On Monday, January 26, 2009, final Mass will be celebrated at 4:00 p.m. Immediately after Mass, dinner will be serve at the residence of Ms. Cynthia Reyes in Chalan Lau Lau Village.

Your presence and prayers are appreciated.

The Family

Biden tries to shush wife after state-VP slip

By NEDRA PICKLER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Joe Biden's wife said Monday that he had his pick of being Barack Obama's running mate or the secretary of state nomination that eventually went to Hillary Rodham Clinton, a slip that the vice president-elect immediately tried to shush.

Jill Biden's comment came during an appearance with her husband on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," taped at Washington's Kennedy Center on the eve of the inauguration.

"Joe had the choice to be secretary of state or vice president," she said. Her husband turned to his wife with his finger to his lips and a "Shhhh!" that sent the audience into laughter. "OK, he did," Jill Biden said in her defense.

The vice president-elect blushed, grimaced and gave his wife a hug while the audience continued to erupt in laughter. "That's right," he finally said to his wife. "Go ahead."

Mrs. Biden said she told him vice president would be better for the family.

"If you're secretary of state, you'll be away, we'll never see you, you know," she said. "I'll see you at a state dinner once in a while."

After the exchange aired on television three hours later, Biden spokeswoman Elizabeth Alexander denied Jill Biden's account in a statement e-mailed to reporters.

"To be clear, President-elect Obama offered Vice President-elect Biden one job only - to be his running mate," the statement said. "And the vice president-elect was thrilled to accept the offer."

AP

This image provided by Harpo Productions shows, from left: Dr. Jill Biden, Vice President-elect Joe Biden, and Oprah Winfrey on the set of the "Oprah Winfrey Show" at Washington's Kennedy Center Opera House Monday, Jan. 19, 2009.

While the statement denies that Obama ever offered Biden the secretary of state job, it doesn't rule out that the two discussed the possibility. Obama's transition office did not respond to questions about their private discussions.

Clinton's spokesman declined to comment about the suggestion that she was the second choice.

Obama made no reference to the comments Monday night, when he praised the Bidens at a dinner honoring his running mate at Washington's Union Station. Obama invited the two on stage, where he kissed Jill Biden's cheek and hugged her husband.

On Winfrey's program, Joe Biden said he didn't immediately take the vice presidential offer since he wasn't sure it was the best place for him to serve. But Biden, who ran against Obama in the Democratic primary race, said he agreed after getting some assurances from Obama about his role.

"This is a partnership," Biden said. "He's president of the United States, but as I said to him when he asked me, I said, `Barack, don't ask me unless the reason you're asking me is you're asking me for my judgment. I get to be the last guy in the room when you make every important decision. You're president. Any decision you make, I will back.'

"He said he wanted to have a confidant and somebody who wouldn't be a yes man. He's pretty sure about that last part," Biden said with a laugh.

Alexander's statement said, "Like anyone who followed the presidential campaign this summer, Dr. Jill Biden knew there was a chance that President-elect Obama might ask her husband to serve in some capacity and that, given his background, the positions of vice president and secretary of state were possibilities. Dr. Biden's point to Oprah today was that being vice president would be a better fit for their family because they would get to see him more and get to participate in serving more."

The Bidens made a surprise appearance on Winfrey's show. The celebrity-filled show also included the premiere of "America's Song," performed by Faith Hill, Seal, Bono, Mary J. Blige, Will.i.am and David Foster in honor of the occasion and available for free download on Winfrey's Web site for 24 hours.

Winfrey also interviewed movie star couple Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher about how Obama has inspired them to pledge to help end slave labor around the world and encourage other people to make a pledge to improve their communities. Other celebrities, including Scarlett Johansson, Justin Timberlake and Forest Whitaker appeared by videotape to talk about what Obama's election means to them.

Winfrey, who made her first ever presidential endorsement for Obama, heralded the significance of the moment particularly coming the day after Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

"I feel like I am better because of his being elected," Winfrey said. "And I think that the country is going to be better. I feel like it is a beautiful thing, and we all start to see ourselves differently, the possibility."

Why wait? DC parties early for the inauguration

WASHINGTON (AP)—Forget the sold-out balls and A-list soirees: Ordinary Americans transformed Washington's streets into one giant pre-party Monday stretching from the overflowing inbound trains at Union Station to the banks of the iced-over Potomac.

A town that tends to take itself way too seriously got a little giddy, and no one was waiting for Inauguration Day to get in on the action.

Homeowners tacked bunting to their porches, high school cheerleaders composed special chants for the new president, and a boys' choir from Kenya wowed a streetcorner crowd with an impromptu concert.

"This is going to be part of our family's history," said Ian Pearce of Brooklyn, who explored the Capitol grounds with his 8-year-old son and other family members. "It will be passed on from generation to generation."

Seventy-year-old Betty Bryant arrived on a charter bus from Augusta, Ga., and stood by the icy reflection pool near the Capitol making plans to rise at 3 a.m. Tuesday to take her place on the National Mall for Barack Obama's swearing-in.

"I'm just really happy that I'm living to see this wonderful event," she said.

A few feet away, a group of people broke into an impromptu chorus of "God Bless America."

The city vibrated excitement, and, if only briefly, its curmudgeons laid low.

Just about anything qualified as entertainment: On a streetcorner not far from the mall, passers-by clapped and cheered the sight of a National Guardsman in fatigues doing push-ups.

The trials of the times were temporarily pushed aside—if not completely forgotten. A sign posted at one bus stop offered Obama congratulations on his inauguration and exhorted "Save $$$; Buy a foreclosure."

The day was not without its annoyances—sure to multiply exponentially on Tuesday. Commuters unfamiliar with the local Metro system queued up in long lines to buy fare cards. Street closures spread virally. Parking garage rates spiked overnight to $25.

Baggage-toting throngs arriving at Union Station found it easier to find souvenirs than taxis, prompting some travelers to head out on long slogs by foot to their hotels—if they were lucky enough to have a room. Those cabbies who could get through the congestion could only shake their heads.

"I have never seen such a mess," muttered one. "I'm staying home tomorrow."

A celebratory air prevailed nonetheless, on a day when even service projects suddenly seemed cool.

Obama had exhorted Americans to make the Martin Luther King Jr. Day a time of national service, and legions took him up on it.

At RFK Stadium, one of many service sites in the city, thousands of volunteers in a heated tent stuffed care packages for the troops abroad with sunblock, playing cards, energy bars and other items. Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, who was among the volunteers, marveled at the feel-good spirit of the day.

"I was stopped at an intersection and somebody rolled down their window and said 'happy MLK day," he said. "There's so much optimism."

Obama and his family and other dignitaries turned up at volunteer sites, too, Joe Biden strapping on a Joe-the-builder tool belt at one site.

Melissa Wolter, 24, drove all night Saturday from Terre Haute, Ind., to be a part of it all. Like thousands of others, she roamed the National Mall soaking up the scene, and there was plenty to see.

"I'm reflecting on ways I can serve, because Dr. King and people like him made it possible for our lives today and for Barack Obama to be able to become president," she said.

Jumbo screens scattered the length of the Mall rebroadcast video from Sunday's "We Are One" concert that featured a galaxy of entertainment's hottest stars. On the West Front of the Capitol, cellist Yo-Yo Ma and violinist Itzhak Perlman rehearsed their number for the inauguration, warmed by a space heater.

Other sights of the city:

■ Motorcoaches parked end-to-end along 14th Street.

■ Drivers polishing their black Lincoln Town Cars. -Metrobuses sporting mini-American flags.

■ Pennsylvania Avenue, the inaugural parade route, awash in American flags—and portapotties.

Oddly enough, some of those departing Union Station had traveled to town for inaugural festivities, but had to leave to get to far-flung hotel rooms.

Gore, enviros celebrate changing of the guard

WASHINGTON (AP)—Green is suddenly glamorous again.

After chafing under eight years of President George W. Bush's environmental policies, advocates supporting renewable energy and conservation gathered Monday night at a glitzy ball to celebrate the greening of the White House.

President-elect Barack Obama, unlike his predecessor, supports stiff, mandatory reductions in the gases blamed for global warming and he wants to create millions of new "green" jobs.

Environmental groups that have spent years playing defense against the Bush administration see an opportunity to push through their policies under Obama.

"The new president totally gets it on these issues," said Gene Karpinksi, president of the League of Conservation Voters. "This is by far the best reason to celebrate that the environmental movement has had."

The event, hosted by former Vice President and Nobel-laureate Al Gore, drew celebrities such as Will.i.am, Blair Underwood and Melissa Etheridge, many of whom made their entrance on a moss green carpet made partly of recycled fiber.

"We need to change the way we use energy, the way we treat the Earth," Gore said.

Also in attendance were Obama's choices to head the Environmental Protection Agency and the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

"I think America voted for a big green step by voting for Obama," said John Legend, who was one of the scheduled performers.

The Green Inaugural Ball was one of four environmentally-themed events scheduled for inauguration weekend. But it strived to be the greenest.

The food was local or organic and cooked in a kitchen nearby to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide. The scraps will be composted. And the ball's contribution to global warming—known as a carbon footprint—will be canceled out by investment in renewable energy projects.

About 2,000 people attended the ball at Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture in downtown Washington.

Marc Anthony, Jennifer Lopez wow inaugural gala

WASHINGTON (AP)—Latino entertainers Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony graced "la alfombra roja"—the red carpet—at Union Station Sunday to give a Hispanic flair to the inauguration pre-celebration Sunday.

They posed quickly for cameras with no visible signs of the marital distress that tabloids have been buzzing about recently. The two singers entertained the crowd at the end of the night.

Lopez introduced Anthony after making a pitch for the new president. "Yes we can," she said to the cheering crowd. "We all stood together and said 'Yes we will.'"

Lopez, wearing an electric blue strapless gown, towered over her husband Anthony, who wore pinstripes. Her piled-high updo added a few more inches.

The couple said little from the carpet, but Anthony traded a hug with Miami-born Wilmer Valderrama, star of "That '70s Show," as he swiftly moved off the carpet.

Valderrama actively promoted registration and voting among young Latinos during the presidential election.

"All of us performers, not until this election did we really understand what we could do," Valderrama said.

Though focus of the night was entertainment, the music quickly mixed with politics.

Tony Plana, who plays Betty's father in the television series "Ugly Betty," said he was ecstatic about President-elect Barack Obama's victory. He said an Obama administration could improve the lives of all minorities.

But he also said Hispanics deserved a better spot on the inaugural festivities list.

"It's a concern this event tonight is not an official event of the administration. It's a little sad for me Latinos had to organize their own event," Plana said. He said he hoped it did not mean Hispanics would be relegated to a back seat. The event was organized by the National Council of La Raza and other Hispanic organizations.

"American Idol" runner up David Archuleta kicked off the night with "The Star-Spangled Banner" and he was quickly followed with music by War.

AP

Actress-singer Jennifer Lopez and husband singer Marc Anthony attend the Latino 2009 Inaugural Gala at Union Station on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009 in Washington.

Carrey, McGregor lock lips with 'Phillip Morris'

AP

Actor Jim Carrey, left and Ewan McGregor speak at a press conference for the film "I Love You Phillip Morris" during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah on Monday, Jan. 19, 2009.

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—Jim Carrey and Ewan McGregor were an item at the Sundance Film Festival, where their gay romance "I Love You Phillip Morris" premiered.

Carrey and McGregor steam up the screen with some hot and heavy necking.

What was it like for Carrey to lock lips with McGregor?

"A dream come true. I mean, look at the guy," Carrey said, gesturing at McGregor during a question-and-answer session with the audience after the film's Sundance premiere Sunday night.

Directed by Glenn Ficarra and John Requa, "I Love You Phillip Morris" is based on the true story of a con man (Carrey) who meets the love of his life (McGregor) in prison, then concocts elaborate escapes and masquerades to free himself and his man.

Carrey and McGregor make a nice couple, their characters' love story playing out with sweetness, passion and devotion. The actors said playing gay was all in a day's work.

"It's the same as playing any other kind of man, any other kind of character," said McGregor, saying there was nothing awkward in their kissing and cuddling scenes.

Tom Cruise 'always wanted to kill Hitler'

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Tom Cruise says playing an anti-Hitler plotter in his latest movie "Valkyrie" fulfilled a childhood fantasy.

In real life, the American actor says he harbors feelings similar to his German character, who led a failed plot to assassinate the Nazi leader.

"I've always wanted to kill Hitler. As a child, I used to wonder why someone didn't stand up and kill him," Cruise told reporters in the South Korean capital Sunday.

Studying his character, would-be Hitler assassin Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, Cruise said he "came to greatly admire him."

"Although the story takes place during the World War II, I found the story ageless," he said. Making the movie "was a powerful experience that I will never forget."

Despite early skepticism toward "Valkyrie," the movie had a solid $21.5 million opening weekend in North America in December and has made a total $77.6 domestically since then, according to the box office tracking Web site Box Office Mojo.

AP

Hollywood star Tom Cruise makes his hand print in wet cement in a hand printing ceremony in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2009. Cruise came to Seoul on Friday to promote his new movie Valkyrie.

Dublin radio airs new U2 single

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP)—U2 fans, get your boots on. The first song from the band's first album in five years is ready for you to hear.

U2 began broadcasting the uptempo single "Get On Your Boots" Monday—first on RTE, Ireland's state broadcasters, then for free on the group's Web site.

For decades, U2 has given Irish broadcaster Dave Fanning first dibs to broadcast its singles. Fanning—a friend of Bono since U2's Dublin rise in the late 1970s—led his morning RTE 2FM show with the song, which he praised as "a big song with lots of layers, but not overproduced."

Giving an advance taste on the Internet to the rest of the world is new. The "Get On Your Boots" single goes on sale Feb. 13 in Ireland and shortly thereafter worldwide.

U2's official Web site also lists all 11 title tracks for the new album, "No Line on the Horizon," which will be released Feb. 27 in Ireland, March 2 in many other countries, and March 3 in the United States.

Young woman's hot temper is cause for friends' concern

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: I am a 16-year-old girl, and I'm pretty popular in my high school. I'm blessed to have several close friends, and we always have a great time together. My grades are good, and I get along well with my mom, dad and little brother. So what's the problem, you're probably wondering.

I had an argument with my girlfriend "Amber" recently. It was over a "guy issue." I won't go into details because we did end up working it out, but Amber said something during the blowup that has me worried. She said that sometimes my anger gets out of control and concerns her. Two other girls who were with us at the time agreed with her. That floored me.

Abby, this is the first time I've heard about this. I mean, Mom sometimes calls me "Tammy Temper"—and has accused me of "throwing fits." But my friends never called me on it. In the fight with Amber, she said my fists were clenched and she was afraid I might hit her. (I didn't think so.)

I don't want to scare people. I value my friends. I look forward to going to college and making new friends and having new experiences. I don't want to have a reputation as a hothead. Can you help me?

"TAMMY TEMPER" IN HARRISBURG, PA.

DEAR "TAMMY": Anger is a normal human emotion. Everyone experiences anger at one time or another. When primitive humans encountered a threat, they would react instinctively with either fear or anger, which gave them a jolt of adrenaline enabling them to fight or escape. It was a survival mechanism.

Infants show frustration by beating their heads against the side of their cribs, screaming or holding their breath until they turn red. Young children throw tantrums, yelling, kicking or hitting. But as we grow older, we learn to recognize what is upsetting us BEFORE we react, and learn to handle the emotion in acceptable ways.

My booklet "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It" contains techniques for handling anger effectively and constructively. It can be ordered by sending your name and mailing address, plus a check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby—Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in this price.

Anger is an important subject. While many people have been taught from early childhood to suppress it, it is also important to learn how to express it appropriately. Admitting our anger verbally is one way. It's like releasing steam from a pressure cooker, which is both appropriate and healthy. Mature adults express emotions without "throwing fits" or making bullying gestures. Because your mother calls you "Tammy Temper" and your friends are voicing concern, the time has come for you to take control.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: When saying the Pledge of Allegiance, should you put your left hand at your side or behind your back?

WONDERING IN NEW YORK

DEAR WONDERING: I was taught that your left hand should be at your side.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

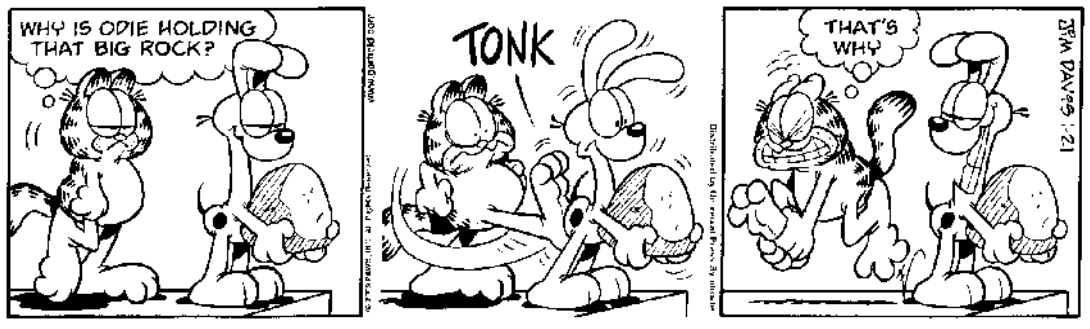
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

SPIFF ESCAPES!
DID CALVIN GET ON THE BUS?
I DIDN'T SEE. ...WHY?
SOMEONE JUST DARTED BEHIND THAT TREE. SEE, THERE HE GOES AGAIN! ISN'T THAT CALVIN?
THE ZOGWARGS HAVE SPOTTED HIM! OUR HERO INFLATES THE EMERGENCY JET PACK HE KEEPS IN HIS POCKET, AND PREPARES FOR TAKEOFF!

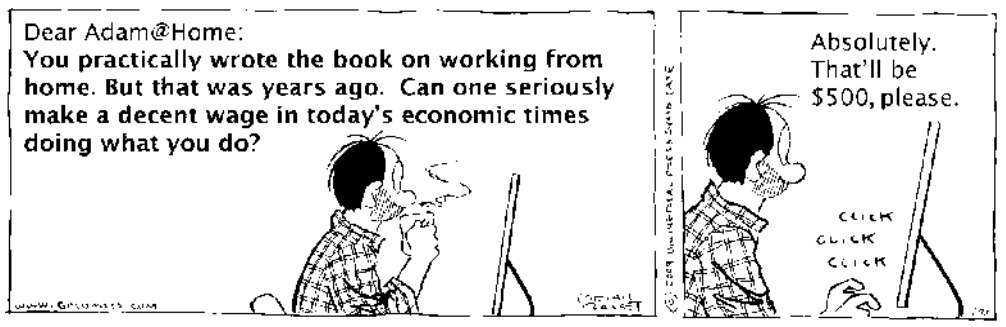
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


Dear Adam@Home:
You practically wrote the book on working from home. But that was years ago. Can one seriously make a decent wage in today's economic times doing what you do?
Absolutely. That'll be $500, please.
CLICK CLICK CLICK

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

First, it is customary to sniff the wine cork.
OH...OF COURSE.
SNIFF
Now rub your ears on the bottle.
PANG! I NEVER KNOW IF THE SOMMELIER IS MESSING WITH ME.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

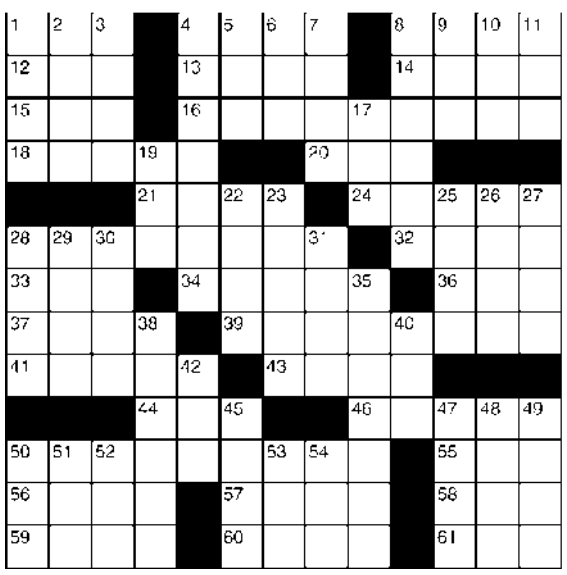
ACROSS
1 Unruly group
4 Carrots' mates
8 Arp's style
12 Gorilla
13 Sicilian volcano
14 State with certainty
15 Eviscerate
16 Do-over coupon
18 Stern or Singer
20 Guy's companion
21 Tony of golf lore
24 Coven member
28 Lake or dam in Montana
32 Emanation
33 Altar affirmative
34 Ex-Senator Lott
36 Fiddler's need
37 Roster
39 Sweater type
41 Slug with a shell
43 '60s protest of a sort
44 Burst
46 Indigent
50 "The Tempest" occurrence
55 Tiny
56 "In -horse open sleigh"
57 Exam format
58 Right angle
59 Fix
60 Recede
61 Tear

DOWN
1 Creche trio
2 Piece of work
3 Bygone VHS alternative
4 Impression obtained by the senses
5 Greek H
6 Folk rocker DiFranco
7 Crooned
8 Showy bloom
9 "Hail, Caesar!"
10 Calendar abbr.
11 Clumsy craft
17 Corvine call
19 Model Carol
22 Ford make, for short
23 Sharp-tongued
25 Toothpaste container
26 Gator's kin
27 Warmonger
28 Son, on the Seine
29 Valhalla VIP
30 Parks or Bonheur
31 Dancing locale
35 Scintillate
38 Left a gratuity
40 Away from SSW
42 Depressed
45 Front of a ship
47 Basin accessory
48 Sandwich shop
49 Kennel cry
50 Muppet eagle
51 Wedding tool
52 Hostel
53 Historic time
54 Holder for 4-Across

Solution time: 21 mins.

G	L	A	D		B	A	S	S		D	O	M
A	O	N	E		A	L	L	Y		O	R	E
S		I	N	G	R	A	Y	S		W	I	T
			I	O	N	S		T	A	N	G	O
C	A	C	A	O			H	E	L	P		
R		A	L		T	R	A	M	P	L	E	D
I	D	S		T	E	E	N	S		A	R	E
B	E	T	H	E	S	D	A		M	Y	N	A
			A	U	N	T			L	A	S	E	R
C	A	W	E	D		E	K	E	D			
A	N	A			P	A	D	I	O	D	A	Y	S
P	O	Y			I	B	I	S		E	P	E	E
E	N	S			L	E	T	S		F	E	S	T

Yesterday's answer 1-21



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Izabella Miko, 28; Emma Bunton, 33; Geena Davis, 53; Robby Benson, 53

Happy Birthday: You'll have plenty of charisma and drive to get things done. Any negative you face you will swiftly turn into a positive. Taking stock of your situation and realizing your true potential will help you maneuver your way into something that will grow rapidly and will make a profit. This is a year of change that will be eye-opening and will redirect you economically. Your numbers are 7, 9, 18, 23, 35, 37, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Your ability to utilize your talents and your past connections will serve you well now. Your proactive manner will result in greater confidence. Advancement is within reach. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Negotiate all you can for the best deal possible in business or in your personal endeavors. Take an upfront approach to all that you do and you will be taken seriously. Love may cost you if you aren't willing to say no to unreasonable requests. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Take advantage of any professional challenge that can help you prove your talent and ability to handle whatever comes your way. Don't let a lover hold you ransom or accountable for something that he or she is responsible for. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Everything you do should be based on partnerships and how well you get along with the people involved. If you can feel comfortable, you will do a better job. Friendly interaction will lead to advancement. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Keep things in perspective and honest and you will find a way to get what you want. A partnership may undergo a change but it will be beneficial to you in the end. Long distance relationships or dealing with people from different backgrounds will present a challenge. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): A change of plans or feelings will cause you grief. Focus on the here-and-now and forget about what emotional games are being played. Step outside the melodrama and put your efforts into something concrete that will lead to your advancement. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Avoid anyone who is on the rampage or looking for a fight. Stay calm and reasonable and concentrate on the projects and people that inspire you the most. Be open to what others are doing but do what works best for you. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Favors will be granted. Get out and present what you have to offer. Don't let friends or relatives take advantage of you. It's the people you don't know that well who will recognize what you have to offer. Love is on the rise. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Look back at your past performance and your true talents will be clear. A new concept or service may be in the works. Added responsibilities at home will set you back emotionally and financially. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Someone from your past will need help. By offering assistance, you will get something important to you in return. Love is showing some interesting twists and turns. Plan a passionate evening for two. A commitment can be made. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You can position yourself for the future if you talk to those who can contribute to your professional ideas. Get on top of any paperwork that needs to be taken care of. Think big but don't spend big. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't let idle chatter, rumors and gossip ruin your day. If you get involved in such nonsense you will end up being blamed by someone you care about. Stick to accomplishing your goals and helping others. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are exceptionally creative and inventive. You are open and relish the new and the unknown. You are original and unusual.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5	4	6	7			
			9			3		
1		6					5	
3	8				6			5
	6						8	
4	7	9						3
8	1		6				2	
2				3	4	6		
			1	5				

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

8	3	5	1	7	2	6	4	9
4	7	6	8	3	9	1	2	5
1	9	2	6	4	5	8	7	3
3	5	8	7	6	1	4	9	2
6	1	9	5	2	4	3	8	7
2	4	7	9	8	3	5	1	6
5	8	1	3	9	7	2	6	4
9	2	3	4	1	6	7	5	8
7	6	4	2	5	8	9	3	1

Difficulty Level ★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY **Solution: 9 letters**

N	A	V	Y	A	I	S	L	E	G	A	R	U	O	C
F	O	T	D	N	A	L	T	A	P	D	S	R	K	I
E	U	I	D	O	L	U	I	S	L	L	E	L	G	T
D	T	D	T	T	L	L	S	E	E	H	A	L	S	I
E	S	E	W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N	R	Z
R	A	R	S	B	M	F	V	W	K	R	I	S	E	E
A	P	C	T	L	R	R	T	H	Y	R	B	S	K	N
L	E	G	D	E	L	W	O	N	K	C	A	A	R	F
D	N	U	O	R	G	N	U	F	E	I	T	P	A	I
O	T	A	B	M	O	C	R	T	N	H	T	L	M	G
V	A	L	O	R	E	N	S	I	O	I	L	O	E	U
A	G	R	A	S	S	D	G	M	G	E	E	I	C	R
S	O	L	D	I	E	R	A	E	N	Y	M	R	A	E
F	N	O	T	S	I	G	I	I	T	I	R	I	P	S
U	G	R	A	V	E	S	F	T	P	R	A	I	S	E

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Acknowledge, Aisle, Army, Battle, Citizen, Combat, Courage, Crect, Duty, Fallen, Federal, Field, Figures, Flags, Glory, Gone, Grass, Graves, Ground, Hero, Homage, Honor, Idol, Information, Land, Markers, Medal, Navy, Notable, Park, Pass, Past, Plan, Plot, Praise, Salute, Sites, Soldier, Space, Spirit, Stone, Talk, Time, Tour, Valor, Virginia, Visit, Washington, W

Yesterday's Answer: Charity

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• 3-Liner	**$25**
• 5-Liner	**$35**
• 3-Liner with picture	**$45**
• 5-Liner with picture	**$55**

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Bryant, Gasol lead Lakers past Cavaliers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kobe Bryant and LeBron James tussled to a virtual standoff Monday night.

But Bryant's supporting cast was far more effective, and that was the difference as the Los Angeles Lakers beat Cleveland 105-88 to snap a five-game losing streak to the Cavaliers.

Bryant had 20 points, six rebounds and 12 assists while shooting 9-of-22. Pau Gasol led Los Angeles with 22 points and 12 rebounds. Andrew Bynum and Sasha Vujacic scored 14 points each and Derek Fisher added 11 for the Lakers, whose 32-8 record is tops in the Western Conference.

James had 23 points and nine rebounds, but shot just 9-of-25. Mo Williams added 16 points, six rebounds and five assists and Sasha Pavlovic scored 12 for the Cavaliers (31-8), who absorbed their most one-sided loss of the season.

Bryant scored nine points during a 16-7 run to start the fourth quarter, giving the Lakers a 91-73 lead with 6:35 remaining. But just when the game seemed out of reach, the Cavaliers scored 11 straight points in three minutes to make it 91-84.

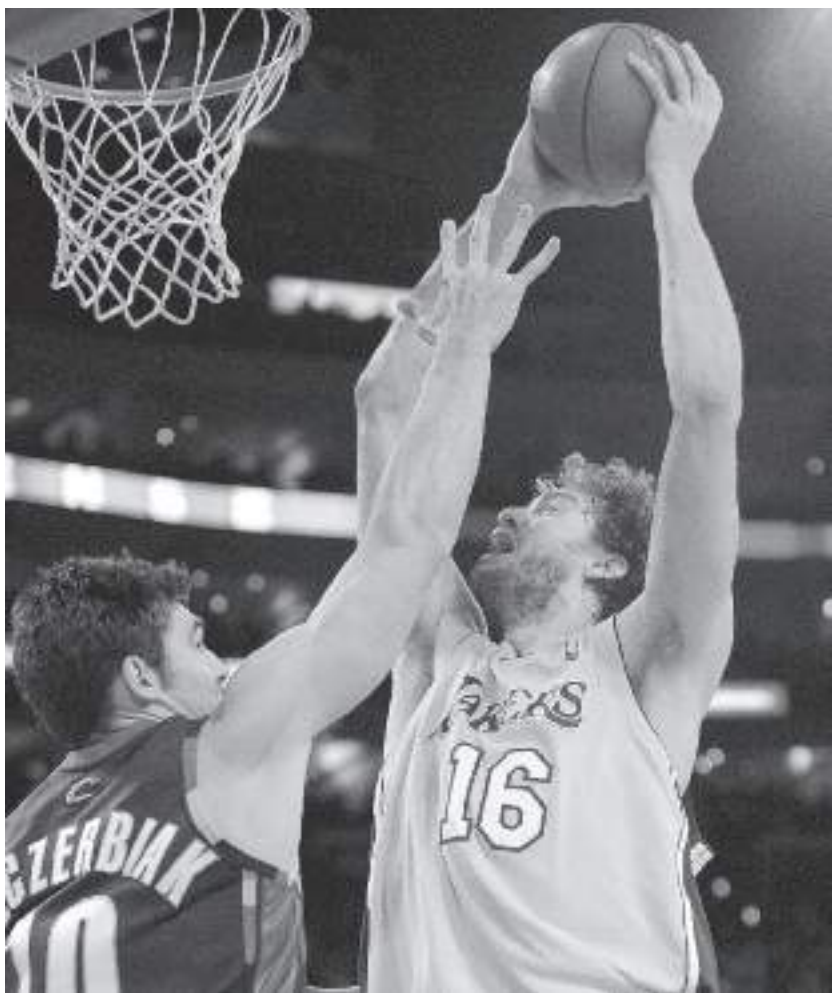
A jumper by Fisher ended the drought, and after a foul shot by James, Gasol scored on a dunk and Trevor Ariza made a 3-pointer to give the Lakers a 13-point lead, and the Cavaliers went quietly after that.

Gasol scored eight points and Bryant added six during a 22-10 run that gave the Lakers a 75-64 lead—largest of the game for either team to that stage. It was 75-66 entering the fourth quarter.

Wally Szczeriak scored seven straight points to give Cleveland a 38-37 lead, and the Cavaliers led 50-49 at halftime. James shot 4-of-11 and scored 10 points in the half while Bryant went 2-of-5 including a 15-footer with less than a second left in the half for five points, but he had six assists.

Bryant began the game guarding James, and the fans reacted with a murmur of anticipation when they saw the matchup.

Bryant, guarded by Pavlovic early on, dislocated the ring finger on his shooting hand in the opening two minutes, but trainer Gary Vitti popped it back into place and Bryant played on without coming out of the game or showing any ill effects.



AP

Los Angeles Lakers forward Pau Gasol (16), of Spain, drives past Cleveland Cavaliers guard Wally Szczerbiak (10) for a basket in the second half of a NBA basketball game, Monday, Jan. 19, 2009, in Los Angeles.

Hornets 103, Pacers 100

At New Orleans, Chris Paul capped a 27-point performance with an off-balance 3-pointer as time expired, lifting the New Orleans Hornets to victory over the Indiana Pacers.

Peja Stojakovic hit five 3-pointers and finished with a season-high 26 points for New Orleans. The Hornets started the game without David West (back) and lost center Tyson Chandler (left ankle) late in the second quarter.

Indiana's Danny Granger scored 30 points, including a tying 3 with 2.5 seconds left, after which he pounded his chest with his right fist. Moments later, he was slumped over, head hanging, as the Hornets mobbed Paul following his winning shot.

Pistons 87, Grizzlies 79

At Memphis, Tennessee, Allen Iverson scored 27 points to help Detroit beat Memphis and end its longest losing streak in five seasons.

Rasheed Wallace scored 11 of his 13 points in the second half to help bring Detroit's five-game skid to an end.

The Grizzlies lost their sixth straight and for the 14th time in 16 games.

Memphis missed 10 of its final 12 attempts. In the fourth quarter, the Grizzlies were 4-of-20 and didn't make a shot in the game's final 2:55.

O.J. Mayo and Rudy Gay led the Grizzlies with 15 points apiece and rookie center Marc Gasol had 12 points and 13 rebounds.

Celtics 104, Suns 87

At Boston, Rajon Rondo scored 23 points in the first three quarters, and Ray Allen scored 20 before sitting out the fourth.

Kevin Garnett had 16 points with eight rebounds, and Paul Pierce had 12 points with eight rebounds and eight assists to help Boston take a 64-34 halftime lead. The Celtics have won five straight since a 2-7 slump that was the worst stretch of the new Big Three era.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 16 with 11 rebounds for Phoenix, which had won seven of its last 10. Amare Stoudemire, the Suns' leading scorer, had just three points on 0-for-7 shooting.

Knicks 102, Bulls 98

At New York, Chris Duhon scored with 31.2 seconds left to help the New York Knicks beat his former team Chicago.

Duhon, questionable with back spasms before the game, drove around two defenders to put the Knicks up 99-98. He then hit two free throws with 22.8 seconds remaining to extend the lead to three after Bulls rookie Derrick Rose missed on a drive.

Ben Gordon, who had just eight points on 3-of-15 shooting, then shot an airball on a 3-point attempt.

Duhon finished with 19 points. It was Rose's arrival as the No. 1 overall draft pick that made Duhon expendable before this season, and the point guard signed with the Knicks as a free agent.

Luol Deng and Rose each had 20 for Chicago.

Mavericks 95, 76ers 93

At Philadelphia, Dirk Nowitzki hit a turnaround 17-foot jump shot at the buzzer and finished with 24 points to help Dallas snap Philadelphia's season-high seven-game winning streak.

Jason Kidd had 22 points and 12 rebounds, Jason Terry added 20 and Josh Howard had 10 for the Mavericks (24-17).

Lou Williams scored 25 points, while Andre Iguodala had 18 points and 12 rebounds for the 76ers (20-21), who are trying to climb above .500 for the first time since Nov. 23 when they were 7-6.

Andre Miller added 12 points for Philadelphia, whose four-game home winning streak ended.

Hawks 87, Raptors 84

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson scored 28 points, including a key jump shot with 12.5 seconds left and Mike Bibby added 23 for Atlanta, which was missing two injured starters.

Josh Smith, the Hawks' only healthy regular up front, had 22 points and 14 rebounds.

Toronto lost its sixth in a row. Chris Bosh had 22 points and 14 rebounds, and Andrea Bargnani had 20 points and 10 rebounds.

Rockets 115, Nuggets 113

At Houston, Yao Ming scored 31 points and Rafer Alston added 18 points and 11 assists as Houston edged Denver.

Denver's Kenyon Martin missed two foul shots with 2.6 seconds left, and Yao rebounded to clinch the win.

Von Wafer had 18 and Luis Scola 16 for the Rockets, who have won five of their last six games and four of five since Ron Artest and Tracy McGrady were shelved to recover from nagging injuries.

J.R. Smith scored 24, Nene had 23 and Martin had 22 for the Nuggets.

Spurs 86, Bobcats 84

At Charlotte, North Carolina, Tim Duncan blocked Raymond Felton's tying shot attempt in the frantic final seconds as San Antonio beat Charlotte.

Duncan's rejection squirted to Boris Diaw, but he missed a game-winning 3-point attempt at the buzzer for the Bobcats, who had their three-game winning streak snapped.

Duncan had 17 points, 11 rebounds and six assists, and produced the game's biggest defensive play after his own shot was blocked by Emeka Okafor with 10 seconds left. Tony Parker added 13 points and 10 assists for the Spurs.

Raja Bell scored 25 points in his best offensive performance since being acquired by the Bobcats last month. Diaw added 16 points and 13 rebounds in a physical, bruising game full of fouls and a brief jaw-to-jaw argument between Duncan and Charlotte's Gerald Wallace after Duncan's layup-preventing shoulder block.

Timberwolves 94, Clippers 86

At Los Angeles, Al Jefferson scored 20 points and tied a season high with 17 rebounds, and Craig Smith also had 20 points to lead Minnesota past the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Timberwolves have won seven of their last eight games after losing 15 of 17. They have won a season-high four straight on the road for the first time since December 2005, when they won five in a row away from Target Center.

Rookie Eric Gordon led Los Angeles with 25 points and reserve Steve Novak had a career-high 18. The loss was the 13th in 14 games for the Clippers, coming off a 101-92 win against Milwaukee on Saturday that ended a 12-game skid.

Warriors 119, Wizards 98

At Oakland, California, Jamal Crawford had 28 points and eight assists, and Stephen Jackson added 26 points in Golden State's win over Washington.

Corey Maggette scored 16 points for the Warriors, who had won three of four just once previously in their disappointing season. Golden State comfortably held off the Wizards, hitting 13 3-pointers and making 53 percent of its shots against Washington's sketchy defense.

Caron Butler, Antawn Jamison and Andray Blatche scored 22 points apiece for the Wizards, who lost for the seventh time in eight games.

Trail Blazers 102, Bucks 85

At Portland, Oregon, Greg Oden had a career-high 24 points and added 15 rebounds as Portland downed Milwaukee.

LaMarcus Aldridge added 22 points and nine rebounds for the Blazers.

Richard Jefferson and Charlie Villanueva had 23 points each for the Bucks, who have lost two straight. Villanueva also had 10 rebounds.

Jeter, Pedroia on provisional US roster for WBC

NEW YORK (AP)—The thought of Derek Jeter and Dustin Pedroia turning double plays together is probably enough to make Yankees and Red Sox fans cringe.

World Baseball Classic, here they come.

On opposite sides of the New York-Boston rivalry, Jeter and Pedroia could make up the United States' middle infield at the WBC in March.

Jimmy Rollins, Evan Longoria and Grady Sizemore also were among 43 players on the provisional U.S. roster. All 16 teams in the tournament had until Monday to submit lists of up to 45 players under consideration for their final rosters, which will be whittled down to 28 spots.

Philadelphia reliever J.C. Romero was on Puerto Rico's roster despite having to serve a 50-game major league suspension following a positive drug test caused by a contaminated supplement. The MLB suspension starts only with the regular season.

Final rosters will be picked by Feb. 24. They must include at least 13 pitchers and two catchers.

Yankees star Alex Rodriguez was included on the Dominican Republic's provisional roster, as expected. A-Rod played for the United States during the first WBC in 2006.

This year's U.S. squad could feature Derrek Lee and Kevin Youkilis at first base, Pedroia and Brian Roberts at second, Jeter and Rollins at shortstop, and Longoria, Chipper Jones and David Wright at third.

Brian McCann, A.J. Pierzynski, Brian Schneider and Chris Iannetta are the possible catchers.

Outfielders included besides Sizemore were Ryan Braun, Curtis Granderson, Brad Hawpe, Ryan Ludwick, Carlos Quentin, Shane Victorino and Vernon Wells.

Mark DeRosa was listed as a utility player.

Scott Kazmir, John Lackey, Roy Oswalt and Jake Peavy are some of the top starting pitchers under consideration. The bullpen could be anchored by closer Joe Nathan.

First-round WBC games will be played in Tokyo, Mexico City, Toronto and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Defending champion Japan faces China in the March 5 opener.

Second-round action shifts to San Diego and Miami, and the semifinals and finals will be played at Dodger Stadium.

In the inaugural Classic in 2006, a U.S. team loaded with All-Stars failed to reach the semifinals, and Japan beat Cuba for the title. The 2006 WBC drew 486 players, about 235 from major league clubs.

Murray, Williams advance as Open heats up

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Andy Murray's first win at Rod Laver Arena lasted only 45 minutes. Lucky him.

With the temperature topping 104 degrees in Melbourne on Tuesday, Serena Williams wanted her first-round match at the Australian Open to be over just as quickly.

The second-seeded Williams, who has an alternate year pattern of titles here since 2003, had a 6-3, 6-2 win over China's Yuan Meng in 75 minutes in the following match on center court.

"Ooh! It's a little hot out here," Williams said. "It was definitely extreme conditions."

Murray only needed to play 12 games to advance—Andrei Pavel retired with a back problem down 6-2, 3-1 and 15-0. When they walked off, the temperature was hovering at 99.

In addition to the heat, the early afternoon sun was nearly blinding at one end of the court.

Williams let several service tosses drop during one game before shortening her motion, costing her some speed.

When a passing cloud brought brief relief, a fan shouted, "Close the roof!" A swirling, gusty wind added unpredictability, and a flurry of moths annoyed the players and sent staffers scurrying to sweep them off the court during changeovers.

Williams, who won the first of her nine majors in Melbourne, attributed her success here with the timing of the event.

"Maybe a new year, wanting to start out the year well," she said. "Also, it seems to not matter in what condition I come in here, I'm able to at least play a solid game."

Photographers at courtside draped their heads, bodies and cameras in wet towels. Spectators fanned themselves with paper and official programs.

Serena Williams of the United States returns the ball to China's Yuan Meng during the Women's singles match at the Australian Open Tennis Championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009.

AP

Oracene Price, mother and coach of Serena and Venus Williams, sat in the bleachers under an oversized straw hat. She had another first-round match to watch later Tuesday, with sixth-seeded Venus opening against Germany's Angelique Kerber on the second showcourt.

Olympic gold medalist Elena Dementieva beat Germany's Kristina Barrois 7-6 (4), 2-6, 6-1. Also advancing were No. 13 Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, 2006 champion Amelie Mauresmo of France and No. 22 Zheng Jie of China.

No. 9 Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland went down to Ukraine's Kateryna Bondarenko 7-6 (7), 4-6, 6-1. She was the highest of the seeded players to fall so far.

On the men's side, No. 6 Gilles Simon beat Spain's Pablo Andujar 6-4, 6-1, 6-1. Fellow Frenchman Richard Gasquet, seeded 24th, advanced in four sets over Diego Junqueira.

No. 17 Nicolas Almagro of Spain, No. 25 Ivo Karlovic of Croatia, and No. 31 Jurgen Melzer of Austria also got through. Melzer overpowered 19-year-old Japanese player Kei Nishikori 7-5, 6-2, 6-1.

Murray is carrying the hopes of a British public looking for its first male Grand Slam champion since 1936.

The 21-year-old Scot, who lost last year's U.S. Open final to Roger Federer, went back out to practice after the sudden finish to his first match.

"It's the first time I've ever won a match on here," he said. "You don't want to win a match like that."

Murray was installed as the favorite or joint favorite for the tournament by British bookmakers after beating Federer three times since losing the U.S. Open final—his best run at a major to date.

"I'm aiming to go one better here and I need all the support I can get," he said, noting the number of Scottish flags unfurled around the stadium. "It's nice. Hopefully they'll keep coming throughout the tournament."

Murray defended his Qatar Open title before coming to Melbourne but said it was still difficult getting used to the Australian summer.

"Even when you sit down at the change of ends, you're expecting to sort of go and chill out a little bit in the shade and it's roasting even when you're just sitting there," he said. "That was tough. If you have a long point, you can feel your feet burning a little bit."

Federer began his quest for a 14th major to equal Pete Sampras' record with a 6-1, 7-6 (4), 7-5 first-round win over 35th-ranked Andreas Seppi of Italy that finished after midnight.

It was a difficult opener, considering Seppi is only just outside the top 32 players who are seeded for the tournament.

Federer had mononucleosis this time last year and that dogged him for months.

"I wasn't fit, I had hardly played any matches, had any practice," he said. "This year I had much more preparation and I feel I know where my game's at."

Rafael Nadal, who replaced him atop the rankings, had a night match Tuesday against Christophe Rochus of Belgium, about the same time No. 9 James Blake is due to play Canada's Frank Dancevic.

Jets hire Ravens coordinator Ryan as new coach

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Jets are confident Rex Ryan was worth the wait. The Baltimore Ravens' defensive coordinator was hired Monday as New York's coach, three weeks after the Jets fired Eric Mangini following a late-season collapse. "We got the right man for the job," owner Woody Johnson said in a statement.

It became apparent the 46-year-old Ryan was at the top of the Jets' list of candidates when several other teams filled their coaching vacancies and New York's remained open. The Jets needed Baltimore's season to end—which happened Sunday with a 23-14 loss at Pittsburgh in the AFC championship game—before offering him the job.

Ryan, the son of former NFL coach Buddy Ryan, will be formally introduced at a news conference Wednesday at the Jets' facility in Florham Park, N.J.

"It's been a dream of mine to become a head coach in the NFL," Ryan said in a statement. "Coming here to the New York Jets, where my father once coached and was part of the Super Bowl III staff, is fantastic. I look around at the facilities and the people they have in place and see a first-class organization. I'm just proud to be part of it."

The Jets announced the hiring, but released no other details. The contract is for four years, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity earlier Monday because the deal had not yet been announced.

The deal was finalized Monday afternoon after Johnson and general manager Mike Tannenbaum flew down to Baltimore in the morning to iron out the details, Jets spokesman Bruce Speight said.

"There is no doubt in my mind that Rex has the expertise and instincts to build on the foundation that we have in place and take this franchise to the ranks of the NFL's elite," Johnson said.

Ryan takes over a team that started 8-3, but missed the playoffs with quarterback Brett Favre after losing four of its last five games.

"I'm very much looking forward to meeting Coach Ryan," wide receiver Chansi Stuckey said in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "His reputation precedes him by the success that Baltimore has had, and I'm very excited to get started."

The Ravens' defensive coordinator the last four seasons is the twin brother of Cleveland defensive coordinator Rob Ryan. His Baltimore defense helped the Ravens to the AFC championship game and has been ranked in the top six in total yardage allowed the last four seasons under Ryan, including second overall this season while leading the NFL with 34 takeaways.

"I think it's a gain for them and a loss for us, but it's well-deserved," Ravens linebacker Bart Scott said. "It was a long time coming."

This will be the first head coaching job for Ryan, who is said to be well liked among his players because of his straightforward, no-nonsense style.

Scott said Ryan makes a good coach because of "his ability to come down to the level of his players and become one of them."

Ryan also interviewed for the St. Louis Rams job that went to Giants defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo.

Ravens' McGahee home, complete recovery expected

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP)—Willis McGahee joined his teammates Monday at Baltimore's training complex after doctors told him he would make a full recovery from a fierce helmet-to-helmet hit in the AFC championship game that had him carted off the field.

"I'm all right. Everything is OK," the running back told reporters as the Ravens cleared out their lockers. "The MRI and the CAT scan checked out good. I was scared, but I didn't know how serious it was. It was pretty intense."

The play occurred in the fourth quarter of Pittsburgh's 23-14 victory. McGahee had just caught a pass and taken two steps before being met by safety Ryan Clark, who drove his helmet into McGahee's facemask. McGahee's head snapped back, and he lost the ball as he dropped to the ground.

"I didn't even see him coming," McGahee said.

Clark also collapsed, though it was immediately apparent that his injury wasn't serious. Players from both teams gathered around McGahee, who lay motionless before being taken away.

"I blacked out. I woke up when they were taking my facemask off," McGahee said. "I opened my eyes and I was talking. The next thing I knew I woke up in some room and they were taking me to the ambulance."

McGahee said he has a concussion and his neck is extremely sore. But he said he would be ready to go next season.

He hadn't watched the replay of the hit by late Monday afternoon, but his memory of the aftermath was vivid.

"I felt like I was OK when I was on the ground, regained consciousness and starting moving," he said. "But then they told me not to move, so I started to get a little worried. After we got inside they took X-rays and told me everything was OK."

As a precaution, McGahee was taken to UPMC Presbyterian Hospital for a CAT scan and MRI, then held overnight for observation. He was released early Monday morning and dropped by his home in Baltimore before attending a team meeting.

Starting at tailback in place of the banged-up Le'Ron McClain, McGahee ran for 60 yards and two touchdowns.

"I just wanted to make a difference in the football game. This was my first AFC championship game," he said.

Phillips 8-ball bash tonight at USSP

USS Peleliu Club is holding an 8-ball tournament tonight at 7pm to celebrate the birthday of the Garapan sports bar and watering hole's owner, Ken Phillips.

The entry fee is $15 and in-house prizes will be provided.

"It's just an excuse to have a larger pot," said Phillips. "The players like it, but tell me they can only afford the larger amount once a month."

Rolly Villanueva got in some practice Monday, coming back through the losers' bracket to take the weekly $5 8-ball tournament.

Villanueva defeated Tata Billones and Juancho Mendoza before falling to John Mongami. Mongami had beaten Phillips and got a little payback for losing to Villanueva and finishing second in the previous week's championship.

Nolan Cultura ran to the top of the winners bracket with wins over Franz De Luna, Taylor Watanabe, and Mongami. Watanabe had sent Rose Phillips to the losers' bracket.

De Luna eliminated Rose Phillips but fell to Villanueva. Mendoza got by Ken Phillips and Billones before losing to Watanabe.

Villanueva then topped Watanabe, took the rematch from Mongami and beat Cultura twice to take the championship in four close games.

The Coco Restaurant employee has been on a bit of a roll lately, also taking second in last week's Tuesday 9-ball round-robin tournament behind Ken Phillips.

For more information about USSP and its weekly billiards events, call Rose or Ken Phillips at 233-1984. ***(USSP)***

MARK RABAGO

Ken Phillips, seen here in a file photo, is celebrating his birthday today and USS Peleliu Club will hold an 8-ball tournament in his honor at the Garapan sports bar and watering hole.

Marianas Coffee Trail Run this Jan. 31

Come Jan. 31, 2009, it will be more than just coffee brewing in the early morning in the Northern Mariana Islands, as the 2nd Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run gets underway.

Organizers are now accepting registration for the run, which offers panoramic views of Saipan's lagoon, challenging terrain through jungle forests, and breath-taking island vistas. Show time on race day is 5:30am, with race time at 6:30am. The course will start at the American Memorial Park and head to the peak of Mt. Tapochao, the highest point of the island, before heading back to Micro Beach at the park. The course also passes some of the oldest coffee trees in the Marianas. A 10K short course fun run will also be available for novice runners.

"Marianas Coffee Trail Run offers runners some of the best scenery in the Northern Marianas, including some beautiful spots off the beat path," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. "Like its namesake, the race should be a refreshing way to start the day for both off-island competitors and residents, alike."

Registration is now ongoing through MVA. Registration is $30. Registration on event day must be made by 5:30am and will be $10 additional. Registration fees include a finisher's T-shirt, certificate of participation, and the awards banquet at 11:30am at Micro Beach. Prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place overall for men and women in both events.

Major sponsors of the event are Marianas Coffee Company, MVA, and Northern Marianas Athletics.

For more information, please contact Akiko Hagiwara at 322-8794 or via e-mail at akiko@pdisaipan.com or Edward Diaz of MVA at 664-3200/01 or at ediaz@my-marianas.com. ***(PR)***

ZAPANTA

From Page 28

1,146 BRS.

Forty-five made the list in the men's rankings, but only 18 joined the season-finale roll-off.

Dumapit and Angeles were joined by Talavera, Ador Dimaano, Percy Omechelang, and 2007 titlist Jon Hensley in the stepladder finals.

Dimaano was ranked 15th in the season with his 416 BRS, Omechelang was ninth (1,000 BRS), and Hensley placed 19th (248 BRS).

In the women's division, Yho was ahead by 125 BRS over Ron Cal (615 BRS) to gain the top rankings last year.

Completing the Top 5 were Elena Soll (545), Gloria Omechelang (497), and Gigi Zapanta (495).

Emi Williams, 2008 Queens of the Lanes, was only in eighth place with her 385 BRS.

Williams took the Queens tiara downing Villavicencio in the finals, 179-149.

Diane Camacho, who placed 10th in the rankings was third in the season-finale roll-offs, followed by Cal, Zapanta, and Soll.

SEVEN

From Page 28

Rezne Wong, tennis' Ji Hoon Heo, triathlon's Eli Torgeson and Tyce Mister, athletics' Jack Kabiriel, baseball's Nicky San Nicolas, and basketball's Jericho Cruz.

Wong won the Male Athlete of the Month title for February tying Heo.

The two youth athletes got the nod of NMASA members with Wong topping the 3rd Annual Saipan Swim Club Heptathlon and setting a new CNMI age-group record (boys' 17 to 18) in the 100m breaststroke.

Wong went on to claim four more monthly plums making it back-to-back in April and May, winning for the fourth time in October, and notching his last in November.

Wong grabbed the April title after finishing first in the 200m individual medley and 100m backstroke, and second in the 50m butterfly and 50m freestyle in the Guam Swimming Federation All-Island Invitational.

The following month, Wong returned to Guam and took the High Point Trophy in the 2008 Guam Championships after winning four gold medals, three silver, and three bronze. On top of his 10-medal haul, Wong reset the CNMI age-group record in the 100m breaststroke.

Heo shared the February honors with Wong after beating CNMI coach Jeff Race in the men's open division finals of the 2008 Coconut Classic Tennis Championships.

In March, there was only one winner in Torgeson, who earned the votes of NMASA members after his fourth place finish in the Saipan XTERRA Championships. He was the fastest CNMI bet in the race and later was the top CNMI finisher, anew, in the Tagaman Triathlon. He also competed in the Guam XTERRA and placed second overall.

In July, Torgeson canned his second Athlete of the Month award after an impressive showing in the 6th OREXTERRA, finishing the grueling 750m swim, 15k mountain bike, and 3K trail run on top of the field.

Kabiriel, the June titlist, was among the CNMI athletes who stood their ground against some of the best in the Oceania region during the Oceania Championships.

He made it into the finals of the 110m and 400m hurdles and won silver medals in the 3000m steeplechase and mixed medley relay. He also set a CNMI record in the 3000m steeplechase.

In August, Saipan Major League held its most-stretched out title series with Rock Steady outclassing the Joeten Motors Rangers in a best-of-five finals, 3-2.

San Nicolas pitched for Rock Steady in the deciding Game 5 and led his team to a win. He was later named Finals MVP and NMASA's Athlete of the Month for August.

In October, it was Mister's turn to get recognition following his third place finish in the 50k division of the 2nd Annual Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle.

Qualifying last for the 2008 NMASA Male Athlete of the Year title was youth cager Jericho Cruz, who starred in the 5th Annual Christmas Basketball Jam at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Cruz played for the G-Stars and scored 33 points in the finals en route to leading his team to an 86-77 title win over Rollers A.

NMASA members will make the selection of the top athletes of 2008 in their second monthly meeting on Feb. 5 and winners will be awarded during the NMASA Sports Banquet tentatively set for Feb. 19.

THE

From Page 28

his 20th year.

The name "marathon" has its roots from an ancient Greek legend, when Pheidippides, a Greek messenger, ran from the town of Marathon to Athens to deliver a message. The legend states that he ran the entire distance, delivered his message that the Persians had been defeated (explaining "We have won.") and then died.

Thousands of people train for and enter marathons without experiencing problems, as long as they prepare for the risks and act accordingly.

According to the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS), there are over 800 marathons worldwide. The most prestigious races include the Boston, New York City, Chicago, London, and Berlin marathons.Other large marathons well known around the world include the Stockholm Marathon, the U.S. Marine Corps Marathon, the Honolulu, Los Angeles, Rome, and Paris marathons. Experts agree that running is good for you, but they advise runners to train mentally and physically. Running smart means running fully informed of the risks. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

DOLPHINS

From Page 28

start to finish and were outgunned by the Dolphins' snipers.

Kagman kept pace with MHS in the first quarter, as the former was behind by only four, 17-21.

Joe Ada, who had six points in the first period joining forces with Cruz in putting MHS in the lead, was more explosive in the second period. The Dolphins guard fired 14 points in the second quarter helping MHS increased its lead to 11 at halftime, 45-34.

No Kagman player scored more than one fieldgoal in the second canto allowing MHS to nail a double-digit lead.

Ada went cold in the third period and the Ayuyus capitalized on this opportunity outscoring the Dolphins for the first time, 20-17, to move within eight, 54-62.

Zack Tudela, who was silent in the first three quarters making only two free throws, save the best for last, hitting 10 markers in the final canto to foil Kagman's bid for an upset.

Ada and Cruz combined for 14 fourth-quarter points, as MHS again dominated Kagman, offensively, 31-23.

Ada finished with 25 points, scoring in double figures for the second straight time after an 18-point debut against Southern.

Cruz more than doubled his output in the first game, as had only 12 against Southern after spending the first half on the bench.

MHS 93 – Cruz 31, Ada 25, Tudela 12, Kenty 9, Rabauliman 6, Untalan 4, Catap 2, Camacho 1.

KHS 79 – Camacho 19, Ogumoro 17, Iguel 14, Brel 13, Cocepcion 6, Lisua 3, Pangelinan 3, Norita 2.

Scoring by quarters: 21-17, 45-34, 62-54, 93-79.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	34	9	.791	_
Philadelphia	20	21	.488	13
New Jersey	19	22	.463	14
New York	16	24	.400	16 1/2
Toronto	16	27	.372	18

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	8	.805	_
Atlanta	24	16	.600	8 1/2
Miami	22	18	.550	10 1/2
Charlotte	16	25	.390	17
Washington	8	32	.200	24 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	31	8	.795	_
Detroit	23	17	.575	8 1/2
Milwaukee	20	24	.455	13 1/2
Chicago	18	24	.429	14 1/2
Indiana	15	26	.366	17

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	27	13	.675	_
New Orleans	25	13	.658	1
Houston	26	16	.619	2
Dallas	24	17	.585	3 1/2
Memphis	11	29	.275	16

Northwest Division

Denver	27	15	.643	_
Portland	25	16	.610	1 1/2
Utah	24	17	.585	2 1/2
Minnesota	13	26	.333	12 1/2
Oklahoma City	8	34	.190	19

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	32	8	.800	_
Phoenix	23	16	.590	8 1/2
Golden State	13	29	.310	20
Sacramento	10	31	.244	22 1/2
L.A. Clippers	9	31	.225	23

Yesterday's Games

New York 102, Chicago 98
Dallas 95, Philadelphia 93
Atlanta 87, Toronto 84
Houston 115, Denver 113
San Antonio 86, Charlotte 84
New Orleans 103, Indiana 100
Minnesota 94, L.A. Clippers 86
Golden State 119, Washington 98
Detroit 87, Memphis 79
Boston 104, Phoenix 87
Portland 102, Milwaukee 85
L.A. Lakers 105, Cleveland 88

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Wade, Mia.	40	412	298	1154	28.9
James, Clev.	38	370	268	1055	27.8
Bryant, LAL	39	382	247	1061	27.2
Granger, Ind.	37	321	232	973	26.3
Nowitzki, Dall.	39	373	228	1012	25.9
Durant, OKC.	41	358	217	988	24.1
Bosh, Tor.	42	336	302	983	23.4
Roy, Port.	36	285	213	815	22.6
Harris, N.J.	35	240	268	779	22.3
Jefferson, Minn.	38	350	142	842	22.2
Johnson, Atl.	39	320	138	859	22.0
Stoudemire, Phoe.	38	296	233	828	21.8
Carter, N.J.	41	302	206	883	21.5
Paul, N.O.	37	262	218	769	20.8
Jamison, Wash.	39	307	143	803	20.6
J. Terry, Dall.	40	308	120	823	20.6
Duncan, S.A.	39	309	174	792	20.3
Gordon, Chi.	41	290	158	830	20.2
Crawford, G.S.	37	255	158	746	20.2
Howard, Orl.	39	270	246	786	20.2

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Nene, Den.	219	362	.605
O'Neal, Phoe.	204	344	.593
Okafor, Char.	225	386	.583
Lee, N.Y.	245	422	.581
Bogut, Mil.	173	301	.575
Howard, Orl.	270	480	.563
Biedrins, G.S.	231	414	.558
Stoudemire, Phoe.	296	534	.554
Millsap, Utah	206	372	.554
Gasol, LAL	251	458	.548

Rebounds

Howard, Orl.	39	176	374	550	14.1
Camby, LAC	35	123	360	483	13.8
Biedrins, G.S.	41	168	322	490	12.0
Lee, N.Y.	39	125	318	443	11.4
Murphy, Ind.	35	65	332	397	11.3
Okafor, Char.	40	158	277	435	10.9
Jefferson, Minn.	38	122	276	398	10.5
Duncan, S.A.	39	101	298	399	10.2
Bosh, Tor.	42	114	303	417	9.9
Yao, Hou.	40	107	281	388	9.7

Assists

Paul, N.O.	37	412	11.1
Williams, Utah	28	276	9.9
Nash, Phoe.	34	306	9.0
Calderon, Tor.	32	273	8.5
Kidd, Dall.	40	335	8.4
Duhon, N.Y.	39	317	8.1
B. Davis, LAC	30	241	8.0
Rondo, Bos.	42	335	8.0
Wade, Mia.	40	295	7.4
Billups, Den.	39	262	6.7

By The Associated Press

Winter Festival of Runs: Marathon and Half Marathon

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Mami Oshima-Berger, second right, joins the other top finishers in various age groups in the marathon event of the 2009 Winter Festival of Runs during the awards banquet at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Half marathon men's top finishers in various age groups pose with Ms. Marianas Sorene A. Maratita, left, and Ms. Teen Marianas Ariel St. Claire.

Half marathon winner Mieko Carey, fifth left, with other top finishers of the race.

Chieko Fukuba, left, and Owen Gabbie are a few meters away from the finish line at Micro Beach at the American Memorial Park.

Full marathon top finisher Izuru Nakashima poses with Ms. Marianas Sorene A. Maratita, left, and Ms. Teen Marianas Ariel St. Claire.

Half marathon runner-up Jack "The Road Runner Bunny" Kabiriel celebrates as he crosses the finish line.

Fred Camacho nears the finish line.

Half marathon second finisher Megumi Shoji cools down after the race.

Lisa Jones raises her arms in triumph.

Lewie Tenorio approaches the finish line.

Joshua Berger catches his breath after crossing the finish line.

Bryant, Gasol lead Lakers past Cavaliers

But Bryant's supporting cast was far more effective, and that was the difference as the Los Angeles Lakers beat Cleveland 105-88 to snap a five-game losing streak to the Cavaliers.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Phillips 8-ball bash tonight at USSP

USS Peleliu Club is holding an 8-ball tournament tonight at 7pm to celebrate the birthday of the Garapan sports bar and watering hole's owner, Ken Phillips.

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Dolphins cruise to 2nd consecutive win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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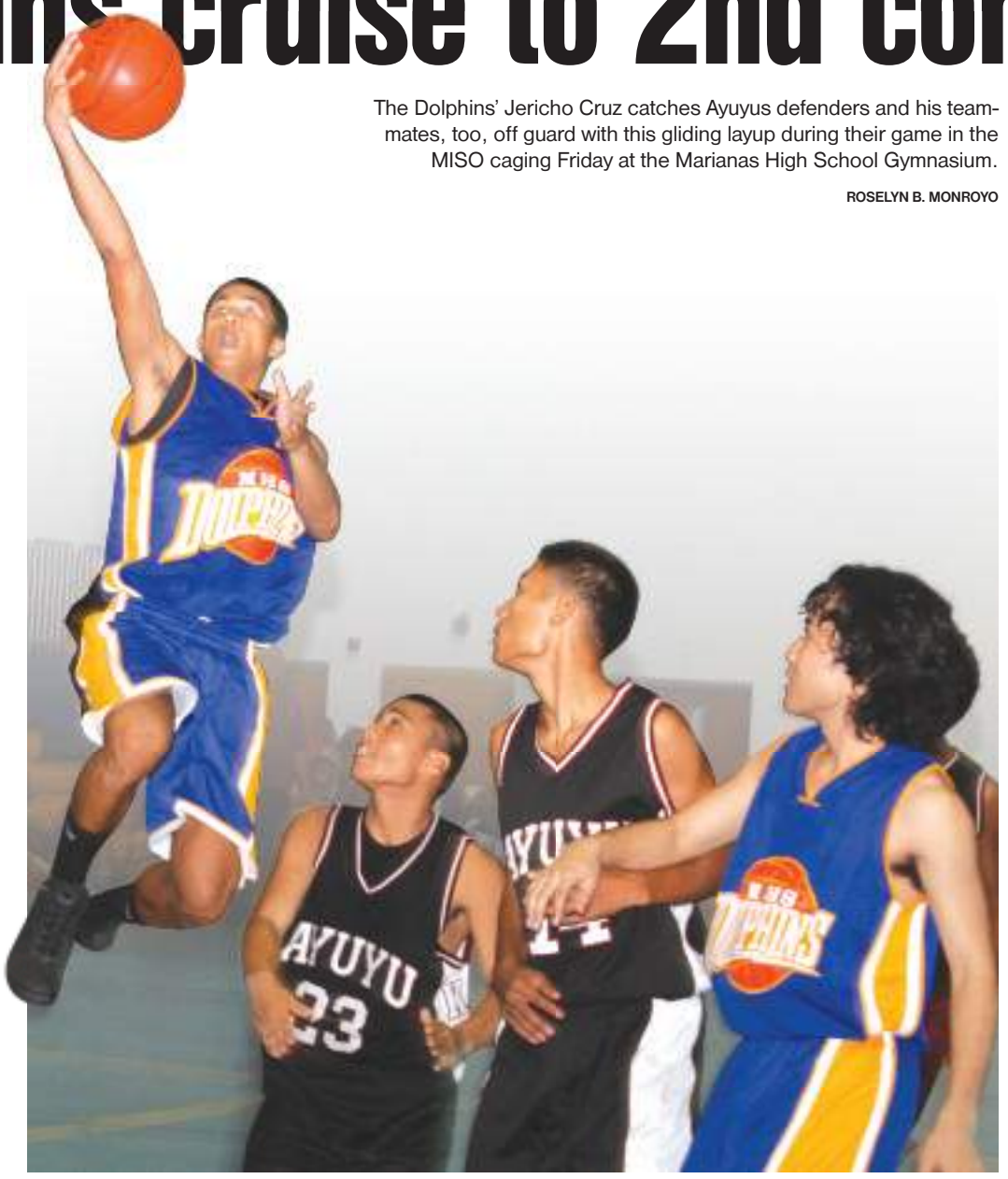
REPORTER



The Dolphins' Jericho Cruz catches Ayuyus defenders and his teammates, too, off guard with this gliding layup during their game in the MISO caging Friday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Jericho Cruz started for Marianas High School and wasted no time in leading the Dolphins to a 93-78 victory over Kagman High School in the boys varsity division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League Friday night at the MHS Gymnasium.

Cruz was allowed to play only in the second half of the Dolphins' debut in the league against Saipan Southern High School on Jan. 11 for disciplinary action. But against the Ayuyus, he was part of the starting unit and made his presence felt early firing nine of his game-high 31 points in the first quarter en route to giving the Dolphins their second straight win.

MHS prevailed over Southern in their first duel since last season's finals, 63-55. Kagman handed the defending champion Manta Rays back-to-back losses after pulling off a 59-57 win on Jan. 15.

The Ayuyus failed to make it two in a row, as they trailed from

See DOLPHINS on Page 26

2008 SAIPAN MARATHON

The thrills and dangers

Even athletes in top condition have to be aware of the dangers of running a grueling 26.2-mile (42.195 kilometers) distance in Saipan's heat and humidity.

First-time marathon runner Joshua Manglona of Tinian crossed the finish line at an outstanding 4:34:58, but just one second later immediately collapsed.

"I experienced a lot of cramps. My morale was low. My body was screaming, Mercy! I just felt like shutting down," said Manglona, describing what was happening to his body.

Fortunately, although a few runners received attention, no one was hospitalized at the 2009 Festival of Runs. Volunteers from the Emmanuel College Vocational Nursing were on hand to deliver much needed care for common ailments, such as overheating, exhaustion, dehydration (not enough water), and muscle cramping.

Manglona recovered quickly. "I knew that a lot of people were counting on me. I was also counting on myself to finish. Once I set myself to something challenging, there's no turning back, and there's no easy way out, but to finish," he said.

The Tinian resident is not new to extreme endurance athletic events, having completed two marathons in the past few months—the 2008 Tinian Triathlon in June and the 2008 Rota Triathlon in November.

When asked to provide some inspiring words, Manglona shared his personal philosophy on limitations.

"Limits. Everyone has them. But I'm talking about physical limits. Few people fear them, and only a few challenge their physical limits. Is it limits that puts the fear in you to keep you from moving, or is it the fact that you can't accelerate your life and inspire the people around you, especially yourself?"

For this young 20-year-old athlete, there are apparently no limits. His next challenge is the 2009 XTERRA Saipan Championship on April 18, just one day shy of his 21st birthday. If Manglona completes this event, it would be his third completed triathlon and one full marathon, all in

See THE on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joshua Manglona of Tinian collapses immediately after crossing the finish line of the Saipan Marathon Saturday. Emmanuel College Vocational Nursing responded within seconds after he hit the ground.

Zapanta, Villavicencio top 2008 BRS rankings

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Raymond Zapanta and Yho Villavicencio earned the most bowlers ranking points in the 2008 season of the Saipan Bowling Association.

Zapanta tallied 1,664 points to lead 44 others in the men's division, while Villavicencio carded 740 besting 19 other female keglers.

Ranking points were awarded based on the performance of the bowlers from each of the 12 monthly roll-offs and from other SBA-sanctioned events, such as the weekly leagues, Masters tournament, PBA Player of the Year, and the Annual PBA Classified.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Top bowlers ranking points-getters Yho Villavicencio and Raymond Zapanta.

Dannie Robles came in second with 1,521 BRS, followed by Richard Leong (1,432), Simon Manacop (1,429), and Robert Talavera (1,313).

Newly crowned 2008 Budweiser King of the Lanes Raymond Angeles was only sixth in the rankings with his 1,236 BRS.

Angeles won the 2008 title Sunday after beating Raul Dumapit in the finals, 180-144.

The runner-up Dumapit was seventh in the rankings with his

See ZAPANTA on Page 26

Seven nominated for 2008 Male Athlete of the Year

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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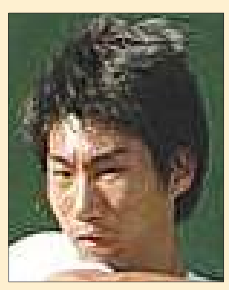
REPORTER

Seven outstanding athletes will be battling for the prestigious 2008 Male Athlete of the Year Award with the winner to be known next month.

The list includes swimming's

See SEVEN on Page 26

Wong



Heo

Cruz

Kabiriel

Mister

Torgeson

San Nicolas